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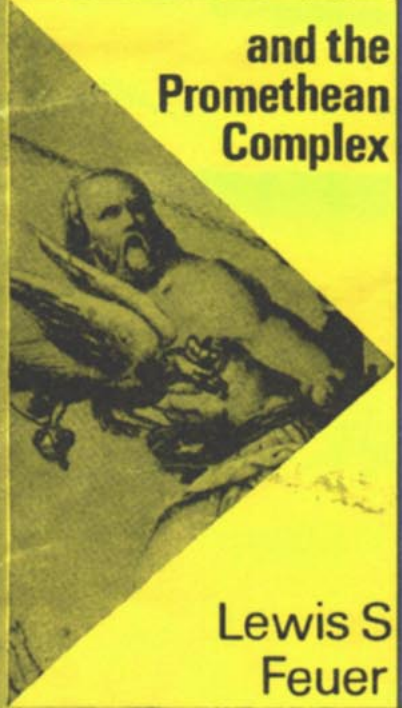

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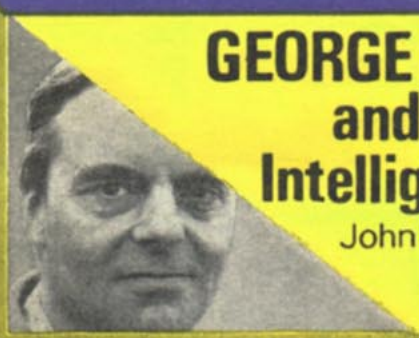

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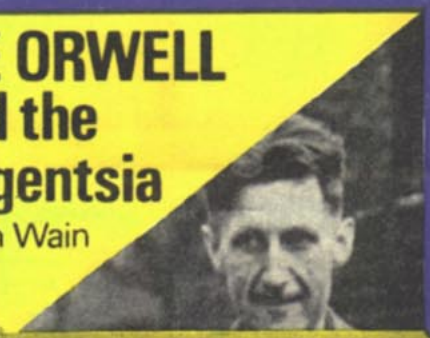

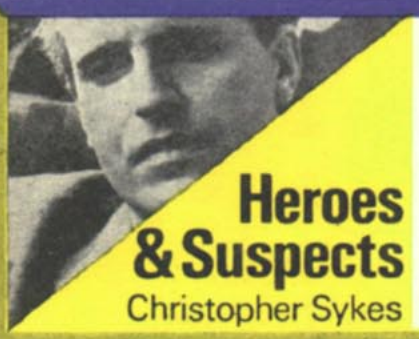

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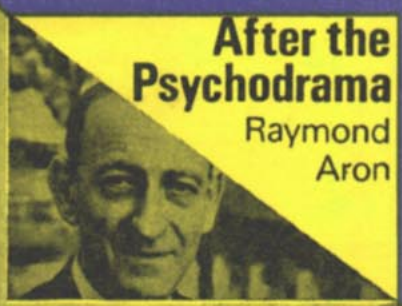

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Blaise Cendrars

Moravagine (II)

MORAVAGINE was in despair. After three years he began to realise that his studies were useless. He had wanted to study music, hoping to come closer to the rhythm of origins and find the key to his being as a justification for living.

As it is performed (and especially as it is taught) music is no more than a laboratory experiment, the diagrammatic theory of what modern technique and mechanics achieve on a vaster scale. The most complicated machines and the symphonies of Beethoven move according to identical laws, they progress arithmetically, they are ruled by a need of symmetry which breaks down their motion into a series of minuscule, minute and identical measures. The figured bass corresponds to a certain meshing of gears which, infinitely repeated, releases with a minimum of effort (wear) the maximum aesthetic value (useful energy). The result is the construction of a paradoxical, artificial, conventional world which can be taken to pieces and put together again at leisure by the understanding. (Dynamic parallelism: has not a learned Viennese physicist taken the trouble of tracing all the geometric figures projected by the Fifth Symphony, and has not a learned Englishwoman just recently translated into vibrations of colour the sound vibrations of this same symphony? This parallelism applies to all the "arts," and hence to every theory of aesthetics. Trigonometry shows, for example, that we can reduce the Venus de Milo to a series of mathematical formulae, and if the marble in the Louvre should be destroyed we could, with a little patience, reconstruct it with the aid of these same formulae and reproduce it exactly an incalculable number of times, just as it is, forms, lines, volumes, stone texture, wear, weight and aesthetic emotion all included!) The rhythm of origins could only be said to intervene if a machine, as soon as it were built, should start up of its own accord with no application of external energy and continue externally to produce useful energy (*cf.* perpetual motion). This is why the closest study of a musical score will never reveal to us that initial palpitation which is the auto-generator and nucleus of the work and depends in its climacteric on the author's general condition, his heredity, his physiology, the structure of his brain, the speed or slowness of his reflexes, his erotic life, etc. There is no science of man, man being essentially the bearer of a rhythm. Rhythm cannot be reduced to a diagram. Only a few very exceptional individuals, the "great madmen," can receive a vehement revelation of it, presaged by their sexual disorientation. And so it was in vain that Moravagine taxed his ingenuity to find an external cause for his discomfiture at living, and sought for an objective theorem that would authorise him to be what he was. Music, like all sciences, is truncated. Professor Hugo Riemann had made himself the philologist of every last note. Using the comparative study of musical instruments, he reconstructed the etymology of every sound, going back in each case to the vibratory source. Sonorousness, emphasis and tone were always modalities, physical accents in the movement, and never revealed anything of the internal structure, the innate articulation, the breath and spirit which amplify an empty sound to the stature of meaning. In the beginning was rhythm, and rhythm was made flesh. Only the greatest, the most obscure and, hence, the most ancient and authentic of religious symbols could have given Moravagine his reply, not these footnoted discoveries by a grammarian of music. But Moravagine had no talent for religion. Whether out of atavism or pride, he never in my hearing spoke of God. Or rather only once

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did he pronounce this name that he had seemed not to know. It was on a pavement, before a public pissoir. Moravagine stepped in some filth. He grew pale, and, gripping my arm, "Shit," he said, "I just stepped on the face of God!" And he stamped and scraped so as not to take a particle away with him.

Moravagine was in despair. He could no longer read a book. Science is history arranged according to the superstition and taste of the moment. The vocabulary of scholars has no wit, no salt. These heavy tomes have no soul, they are filled with distress. . . .

Moravagine runs out on me. I spend whole days without seeing him. Then a dark rumour begins to spread through the populous quarters of the city's centre. There is a maniac who hides in shadowy hallways, in houses with two exits. He rushes at women, rips open their bellies and flees. He proffers his earnest attentions by preference to young girls, and even attacks children. He leaves fresh victims every night and operates as far out as the last suburbs. Berlin is in a ferment. The populace is terrorised. The rumours grow more precise. The papers devote whole columns to lists of victims of the one they call "Jack the Ripper." They print his description. A reward is posted for his arrest. I recognise the silhouette that emerges from these articles. It is Moravagine. One day I question him. He admits all. It is time to go elsewhere and find another outlet for this frenzy. I get him on a train. Three days later we are in Moscow.

Russia, 1904

Moscow is beautiful as a Neapolitan saint. An azure sky reflects, examines, marks the bevel of the thousand-thousand towers, steeples and campaniles that rise and stretch up, rearing, or fall back heavily in fat, bulbous forms like many-coloured stalagmites, bubbling and crawling with light. The streets, paved with cobblestones, are full of the rattling of the million hackney-cabs that teem there day and night; narrow streets, or straight, or curved, they worm their way between the red, blue, saffron and ochre façades to widen suddenly before a golden dome whipped like a top by flocks of noisy crows. The whole scene is raucous, everyone shouts, from the long-haired water-bearer to the tall Tartar selling used clothes. People pour from shops and chapels on to the streets. Little old women sell Crimean apples smooth as gall-nuts. A bearded constable leans on his long sabre. Everywhere underfoot are chestnut burrs and the crisp cupules of tiny, black ash-berries. A fine dust of horse-dung falls in a drizzle like the flakes of russet gold in a liqueur. On the great squares the trams, with a loud screeching of wheels, make their turns around pyramids of shining "arbutus berries" which are not fruits of the arbutus but water-melons. An acrid, musty smell of rotten fish stands out sharply from the honeyed background odour of musky leather. Two days later snow falls. Everything is hidden, subdued. All sounds are muffled. The sleighs pass silently. It snows. It snows feathers of down and the roofs are puffs of white smoke. The houses retire into themselves. The towers, the churches are eclipsed. The bells ring underground, with a wooden knell. The restless multitudes have found a new tempo, their steps are short and hurried, they rush along. Every passer-by is a clockwork toy. The cold is like a resinous glaze. It lubricates. It fills your mouth with turpentine. Your lungs are greased and you feel a tremendous hunger. In every house the tables groan under the weight of food; golden, fragrant cabbage pies, lemon bouillons with sour cream; appetisers in every shape, to every taste; smoked fish; roast meats; grouse with a sweet-sour jelly; game meats; fruit; bottles of spirits, black bread, soldier's bread, and *kalatch*, that pure flower of the wheat.

The Russo-Japanese war was drawing to an end; the first creakings of the revolution were making themselves heard.

Sitting in Phillipov's we saw, Moravagine and I, the first stains of blood pierce the snow. They spread like clusters of dandelion-leaves all about the Governor's Palace, a great wine-coloured space in the city's centre where the snow was beginning to melt. We were also witnesses of the first riots, far out in a working-class district whose name I have forgotten, the other side of the Smolensk railway tracks, and wounded students were carried off by the Cossacks and the police.

Soon the revolution broke out.

We took an extremely active part in it. We established contact with the committees in Geneva, in Zürich, in London and in Paris. Moravagine put enormous sums at the disposal of the central treasury of the Russian Socialist Party. We also supported the Russian and in-

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ternational anarchists. Clandestine presses were set up in Poland, in Lithuania, in Bessarabia. Bales of newspapers, pamphlets and tracts travelled in all directions and were distributed in bulk in factories, ports and barracks by the little Jews of the Bund, who were in our pay. They contained attacks on universal suffrage, on liberty and fraternity, and preached the social revolution and an all-out class war. They demonstrated scientifically the legality of the expropriation of property in all its forms—theft, murder, and extortion—and the necessity for social and economic terror through the sabotage of factories, the pillage of public property, the destruction of railways and port installations. They also contained a number of formulae for making bombs and detailed instructions on the use of infernal machines. Depots of armaments were established in Finland. Frenzied propaganda was carried on among the troops at Mukden and Karbin and all along the Trans-Siberian. Mutinies sprang up almost everywhere, assassinations were carried out in every city of the giant country. The imagination of the masses had been caught, strikes were organised in every industrial centre, pogroms ravaged the cities of the south-west. The reaction promised everywhere to be frightful and merciless.

Then the dance began.

We were in a ticklish spot.

I DO NOT PROPOSE to retrace here the history of that revolutionary movement which lasted from 1904 (the attempt on Plehve's life) to 1908 (the dissolution of the third Duma), nor do I intend to list the incalculable number of political assassinations committed, the riots and revolts, the troubles and disorder, nor to go into the bloody annals of the reaction, machine-gunnings, mass hangings, deportations, arrests, sequestrations, nor to enumerate all the cases of terror, of collective madness at the court and among the people and the bourgeoisie, nor to tell why the most ardent followers of the pure Maria Spiridonova or of the heroic Lieutenant Schmitt lost sight of their revolutionary ideals of social renovation and went about in gangs committing common-law offences, nor how the lively intellectual younger generation came to reinforce and lead the ponderous army of crime. These events are still in the memory of all and already form a part of history. If I speak of certain tragic episodes and sketch them in crudely it is only to give a better notion of the process of Moravagine's development and describe the way in which he was exposed to the atmosphere of Russia at the time.

This epoch, which set Holy Russia a-tremble and saw the beginning of the Czarist throne's decline, left an indelible mark on the hundred and twenty million inhabitants of this vast empire. Madness and suicide became everyday phenomena. Everything was thrown out of kilter: institutions, family traditions, the notion of honour. A frantic loosening of all ties, which was mistaken for mysticism, was at work in every level of society. Schoolboys and girls under fifteen became addicted to saninism; prostitutes organised themselves in unions and the first demand on their list was the right to human respect; illiterate soldiers began to philosophise and their officers argued over orders received. In the countryside the new laxity of morals was even more pronounced, and religion's ancient trunk put forth unexpected and virulent shoots. Hysterical priests and monks emerged suddenly from the population to rise as far as positions of high influence at Court; whole villages joined in half-naked, flagellant processions; on the Volga, Jews committed ritual crimes, slaughtering Orthodox new-born babies to celebrate Easter. Strange Asiatic superstitions spread among these motley populations and manifested themselves in the form of monstrous and repugnant practices. A man drank menstrual blood to hold fast the affections of a fickle chamber-maid; the Empress anointed her hands with dog-filth to massage the vast forehead of the hydrocephalic crown-prince. The men became paederasts, the women lesbians, and every couple practised Platonic love. The general thirst for pleasure was unquenchable. In towns, the façades of houses were rent by the gaping, flamboyant doors of bars, of dance-halls, of night clubs. In neighbouring booths or private salons of the great restaurants—The Bear, Palkin's, The Islands or The Moïka, cabinet ministers resplendent in their grand crosses or shaven-pated revolutionaries and long-haired students vomited champagne among the debris of broken china and raped women.

Rifle fire crackled amid the muffled explosions of bombs.

And then they went back to their orgies.

WHAT A FIELD of observation and experiment for a scientist! On both sides of the barricade, unheard-of acts of heroism and sadism. In the

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depths of the prisons, in the casemates of the forts, in the public streets, in the lodgings of conspirators, in workers' slums, in the receptions at Tsarkove-Selo and in the sessions of the Councils of War, everywhere, one met with nothing but monsters, deviate humans, dismayed, incapacitated, all their nerves raw and overstrained: professional terrorists, priests who were paid instigators of riots and uprisings, bloodthirsty young aristocrats, inexperienced and clumsy executioners, police officers who were cruelly bureaucratic and sick with terror, governors emaciated by fever and the insomnia that comes with responsibility, princes stricken dumb with remorse, or trauma-ridden grand-dukes. Madmen, madmen, madmen, cowardly, traitorous, besotted, cruel, sly, villainous, two-faced masochists and killers. Irresponsible maniacs. What a clinical sight, what a heyday for experiment! And even though I was unable to reap anything from all this—kept frantically busy as I was by events, by Moravagine's influence over me, by the long series of adventures into which he hurled me, the life, with its thousand vicissitudes, into which he dragged me, the life I was forced to live, an active life full of direct action, that direct action that is worthless to an intellectual—at least I never for a moment lost my scientific coolness nor my attentive curiosity. For that matter, as I had dedicated myself wholly to Moravagine, the spectacle of him was sufficient for me.

MORAVAGINE had already sacrificed the greater part of his fortune to the revolutionary movement. The small sums that we could still lay our hands on were swallowed up by the urgent needs of the Party. One day we would be in Warsaw, the next in Lodz, then in Byelostock, Kiev or Odessa. We were lodged by devoted partisans who almost always lived in the ghettos of these towns. We picked up work here and there in dockyards or factories or, when help failed to arrive from abroad, we stole merchandise from the docks or from railway warehouses. After such crimes we usually disappeared into the countryside. Village schoolmasters would hide us for months on end and finally direct us to senior workers, overseers or foremen, who would give us employment for a time in the mines of the Urals or the steel foundries of the Don basin. Moravagine experienced a sensual pleasure in plunging at last into the most anonymous abyss of human poverty. Nothing discouraged or disgusted him, not even the enervating promiscuity of the poor folk who took us in, the putrescent filth of the workers and peasants, the nauseating dishes which, in the towns, certain wretched Jews offered us at table, nor the overweening presumptuousness that was the fashion in revolutionary circles. I could never quite grow used to the communist manners of the Russian students and intellectuals, and when Moravagine saw me flinch before an overripe pickled herring or a plate of *kascha*, or grimace when a comrade borrowed my linen or pulled on a pair of my trousers, he would laugh his head off, enormously amused. For his part, he was at home everywhere, and I never saw him so gay, so talkative and carefree as he was at that time. He passed himself off as the famous terrorist Simbirsky, Samuel Simbirsky, the *narodnovolye*, the assassin of Alexander II, escaped from Sakhalin, and his prestige was tremendous everywhere. It was Mascha Uptschak who had had the idea of this subterfuge when the true Samuel Simbirsky died in an attic in the Impasse du Maine in Paris, of tuberculosis of the bone.

Mascha stayed with us through all our wandering. Moravagine was very taken with her and this relationship which, as we shall see, developed in a rather unusual fashion, later had a great effect upon his ideas.

Mascha Uptschak was a Lithuanian Jewess. She was a big woman with an opulent bosom, and a belly and behind that were, one might say, cumbersome. From this abundant body protruded a long, soft, flexible neck which supported a minuscule, bony head with drawn features, a sickly mouth and a forehead like a dream. With its frizzled hair it resembled the pasty face of a romantic poet, the face of a Novalis. Her great, staring eyes were pale blue, cold blue, blue enamel. Mascha was extremely short-sighted. She could have been between thirty-five and thirty-eight. She had been a serious scholar in Germany, with a solid education in mathematics behind her, and had even written a book on perpetual motion. She was a cruel, cold and logical woman, never at a loss for ideas, with a satanic inventiveness and perversity when it came to planning some new stroke of devilry such as carrying out an assassination or slipping out of some police snare. It was she who prepared our plans down to the slightest detail, and everything was foreseen and timed, minute by minute. Each of us knew

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exactly what he had to do, second by second, covering a certain area, taking up a certain position, making a certain gesture, stooping, running, one, two, three, four, leaping with the bomb, firing a revolver in his own mouth or making off; and deeds and events took place exactly as she had calculated, leading one to the other and falling into place just as she with her prescience and realism had said they would. She often astounded us with the daring of her ideas and the clear and logical way in which she explained them. She was a mixture of tragic actress and prophetess. She had an infallible way of choosing, among all the vague generalities that made up the intelligence we received, the one typical, true, reliable and human detail that must be taken into account in order to succeed. In action, in the field, she was without fear. But in matters of love she was sentimental and stupid, and Moravagine often drove her into a rage.

We met Mascha in Warsaw while she was managing our main clandestine printing press. It was she who wrote our proclamations, those manifestos and pamphlets which had such an influence on the masses, setting off so many strikes and causing so much destruction. She had a genius for the rostrum, and no one knew as well as she how to appeal to the base intincts of the mob. The dominating way of her fiery eloquence was irresistible. She grouped her facts succinctly, explained them and gave them the emphasis that suited her purpose, then suddenly drew conclusions from them which were astonishing in their simple, concise logic. She could rouse the fanaticism of the people by enumerating how many victims had fallen in this place or that for such and such an ideal, commemorating those who died on the barricades on such and such a day in a particular place, naming those who chose to rot in a dungeon rather than betray the just claims of the working class. Then she would remind people of the thousand little annoyances that each of them had had to put up with from bosses, factory-owners or landlords; at such times she grew insinuating and spiteful like some old gossip, and there was nothing like the memory of these countless petty vexations to put the proletariat in a rage and make them join the movement.

In private, with Moravagine, she was a different person. She grew vulgar, whining, sensual and lascivious, and Moravagine tormented her terribly.

Mascha and Moravagine formed an incongruous couple. She, strong, substantial, enterprising, with the ways of a man, a strapping virago (except for the soft curve of her neck, her little, bird-like head, her staring eyes, her pallor, the disquieting fissure of her ghoul's mouth; he, minuscule, puny, bandy-legged, prematurely aged, spiritless, obliterated, his face ossified, of doleful mien (but from time to time shaken by a sudden burst of laughter, a demoniac hilarity that sent him reeling). I understood perfectly that a twisted mother-instinct had impelled Mascha to adopt this wretched weakling of a Moravagine and look after him, coddling and holding him in her arms, hugging him with all her strength; what I could not understand was the way in which Moravagine let her have her way, he who had always hated women. Equally inexplicable were his sudden rebellions, when I saw him leap up to insult, humiliate, mock and often beat her. I thought for a time that he did this out of simple cruelty, and only much later, when Mascha wanted a child, did I realise that love is a deadly poison, a vice that one wants to see shared, and that if one of the two involved is smitten, the other is often no more than a passive participant, or a victim, or possessed. And Moravagine was possessed.

Love is masochistic. These cries and complaints, these sweet alarms, this anguished state of lovers, this suspense, this latent pain that is just below the surface, almost unexpressed, these thousand and one anxieties over the loved one's absence, this feeling of time rushing by, this touchiness, these fits of temper, these long daydreams, this childish fickleness of behaviour, this moral torture where vanity and self-esteem, or perhaps honour, upbringing and modesty are at stake, these highs and lows in the nervous tone, these leaps of the imagination, this fetishism, this cruel precision of the senses, whipping and probing, the collapse, the prostration, the abdication, the self-abasement, the perpetual loss and recovery of one's personality, these stammered words and phrases, these pet-names, this intimacy, these hesitations in physical contact, these epileptic tremors, these successive and ever more frequent relapses, this more and more turbulent and stormy passion with its ravages progressing to the point of the complete inhibition and annihilation of the soul, the debility of

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the senses, the exhaustion of the marrow, the erasure of the brain and even the desiccation of the heart, this yearning for ruin, for destruction, for mutilation, this need of effusiveness, of adoration, of mysticism, this insatiability which expresses itself in hyper-irritability of the mucous membranes, in errant taste, in vasomotor or peripheral disorders, and which conjures up jealousy and vengeance, crimes, prevarications and treacheries, this idolatry, this incurable melancholy, this apathy, this profound moral misery, this definitive and harrowing doubt, this despair—are not all these stigmata the very symptoms of love in which we can first diagnose, then trace with a sure hand, the clinical curve of masochism?

Mulier tota in utero, said Paracelsus. Which is why all women are masochists. Love, for them, begins with the ripping of a membrane, to end with the fissure of the whole being at the moment of childbirth. Their whole life is nothing but suffering. Every month they are flooded with blood. Woman lives under the sign of the moon, that pale reflection, that dead star, and this is why, the more life she brings into being, the more she engenders death. The mother is far more a symbol of death than of generation, and which mother would not prefer to kill and devour her children if she could be sure in so doing of binding to her and keeping her male, of being permeated by him, absorbing him from below, digesting him, letting him be macerated within her in a state reduced to that of foetus, and carrying him thus her life long in her womb? For that is what it all amounts to, this tremendous machinery of love: the absorption, the reabsorption of the male.

Love has no other end, and as love is the whole moving force of nature, the sole law of the universe is masochism. This ceaseless flow and passage of lives, what is it? Destruction, nothingness; and this diversity of forms, this low, painful, illogical and absurd adaptation in the evolution of creatures—just so much pointless cruelty and suffering. A living being never adapts to his environment, or, if he does, he dies in the process. The struggle for life is the struggle for non-adaptation. To live is to be different. This is why all the great vegetable and zoological species are monstrosities. The same applies in the moral field. Man and woman are not made to understand and love each other, to melt together and be indistinguishable. On the contrary, they detest each other and tear each other to pieces; and if, in this battle which bears the name of love, the woman passes for the eternal victim, it is in reality the man who is killed, time and time again. For the male is the enemy, an enemy who is clumsy, blundering and over-specialised. The woman is all-powerful, she is more firmly seated in life, she has numerous erogenous zones and thus is better able to bear suffering, she has more resistance, her libido gives her extra weight, she is the stronger. Man is her slave, he surrenders, he wallows at her feet, gives up without a struggle. He submits. Woman is masochistic. The sole principle of life is masochism and masochism is a principle of death. For which reason existence is idiotic, imbecile and vain, without ultimate purpose. And life is futile.

Woman is malignant. The history of all civilisations shows us the devices put to work by men to defend themselves against flabbiness and effeminacy. Arts, religious doctrines, laws and immortality itself are nothing but weapons invented by men to resist the universal prestige of women. Alas, these vain attempts are and always will be without the slightest effect, for woman triumphs over all abstractions.

In the course of the ages, sooner or later, we see all civilisations in jeopardy, disappearing, declining and falling into ruin through rendering homage to woman. Rare are the forms of society that have been able to resist this impulse even for a few centuries, as did the contemplative order of the Brahmans or the categorical community of the Aztecs; the rest, like the Chinese, have succeeded only in inventing complicated systems of masturbation and prayers to calm the frenzy of the female, or, like the Christians and Buddhists, have resorted to castration, corporal penances, fasting, cloisters, introspection and psychological analysis to give men new counter-irritants. No civilisation has ever escaped submission to the female, apart from a few rare societies of young and ardent male warriors whose apotheosis and decline were as swift as they were short, such as the paederast civilisations of Nineveh and Babylon, which were more perfectionist than creative, knowing no restraint in their feverish activity, no limit to their enormous appetites, no bounds to their needs, and which devoured themselves, so to speak, as they disappeared, leaving no trace of themselves, as all parasitic civilisations perish dragging a whole world with them. There is not a man in ten million

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who escapes this obsession with women or who, if he murdered one, would do it directly, with one blow. And murder is, at that, the only efficient means that a hundred billion generations of males and a thousand-thousand centuries of human civilisation have found to avoid the domination of womankind. That is to say, nature knows no sadism, and the great law of the universe—creation and destruction—is masochism.

Crossing the Atlantic

WHEN YOU'VE LEFT behind the hell that is Russia, life seems a good and pleasant thing. You are touched by the sight of people working quietly, and their fate seems enviable and comfortable. Even London, overpopulated, sooty and commercial, seems lovable. The man in the street, the man of leisure as well as the worker, precise, correct and self-contained in his sober elegance, is part of a well-ordered whole and keeps to his place in the team. What a contrast with life in Russia! The whole of English life is nothing but a sporting game, with its fair play, its laws and chivalric customs, and the whole country, raked clean, shady, green and mowed like a lawn, is nothing other than an immense playing-field whose boundaries are marked by gales of wind, planted like banners at its four corners. Around it, the sky and sea have the fat cheeks of children, healthy children, scrubbed children, rich children with new toys, sparkling locomotives and shining ships. The cities are like mahogany cabins where these two great babies sometimes come in to rest, and when they wake their eyes are clear, they babble happily and are the joy of their family which is England.

On board the *Caledonia*, which is taking us from Liverpool to New York, Moravagine and I never leave the private suite we've taken. Or if we go out, it's at tea-time, and we mingle with the children. We need to pursue the cure of innocence begun in London the moment we disembarked, after that frightful trip at the bottom of the hold; and a stay of three weeks in England was still not enough. We went up to Scotland, down to Cornwall, we wandered for ten days in Cumberland, it didn't help. Lonely, taciturn and sullen we wandered, not burdened with remorse, but empty of all feeling. It wasn't until we were on board ship that we realised the superb curative properties of England, its soft climate, its atmosphere of innocence, the admirable behaviour of its inhabitants, the beauty and health of its children and of life in that country, and we began to miss it sorely. This is why we seek out the company of the little ones, to relax and comfort us. We're continuing the treatment.

We lie about the whole day. For my part I have no desire to go out, and it was Moravagine who discovered this five-o'clock cure, at tea-time, among children, laughter, all the nursemaids and one monkey.

OUR APARTMENT, on the port side of the top deck, consists of two bedrooms, a vast living-room, a small winter garden and a pool large enough to splash about in. The neighbouring suite is occupied by a German, Mr. Kurt Heiligenwehr, known as Topsy. Topsy Heiligenwehr travels in every country and visits every capital in the world, where he stages a show in music halls with his trained monkey, Olympio. It is in homage to his companion, who makes a fortune for him, that Mr. Heiligenwehr has taken the other luxury suite to starboard.

Olympio is a large reddish orang-outang. Whether he comes from Borneo or not he's the most elegant creature aboard. It takes two Innovation trunks to hold his collection of suits and his under-finery. It is impossible to set foot on deck without immediately bumping into him. Early in the morning there he is in white flannels, in a coloured sweater from which emerges the collar of a Byronic shirt, his feet shod in suede, his hands gloved in chamois, playing tennis, shuffleboard or deck-golf. His attitude to his partners is icily correct. After a winning or losing round of these games he changes quickly. He puts on patent-leather riding boots with little silver spurs, a pink jockey's jacket, and, pulled down over his ears, a jockey's cap; then he runs to the gymnasium waving a rhino-skin whip. There, he gravely mounts the mechanical horse or camel and does his best to regulate its steam-driven movements. When he takes to the sculling machine he wears a little pair of shorts that come halfway down his thighs, his torso is superbly moulded in a little jersey of transparent silk, and a great handkerchief in the American colours is knotted around his waist. Then he goes for a bath and swims like a man in his private pool. The rest of the morning is taken up by his toilette, between his valet who combs and perfumes him and the

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ship's manicurist, who does the nails of all four feet. Olympio, swallowed up by an ample bathrobe of flowered Chinese silk, relaxes voluptuously throughout all this. Towards noon he appears in the bar nattily dressed in a bright blue or pale reseda suit from one of the best tailors. His hat is slightly tilted, his new tie is decorated with a pearl; he has a flower in his buttonhole and light-coloured spats over his shoes. He leans on a cane with an amber head, smokes a fat cigar with the band still on it, drinks a cocktail, fiddles with the watch-fob that hangs at his belly, constantly pulling out his watch, looking at the time, making it ring. At lunch-time he retires to his suite, sits down at table, ties on his serviette and eats slowly, using knife, fork and spoon. After coffee he stretches out in a hammock, smokes gold-tipped cigarettes, reads the papers, absent-mindedly peruses the illustrated magazines and takes his siesta. On waking he rings for his valet and dresses again. He comes out with an astonishing selection of sports suits with half-belts and multiple pockets. Now it's time for the promenade. He loves to make the rounds of the deck on roller skates. At other times, perched on a chromed bicycle, he weaves among the first-class passengers, tipping his hat elaborately. He can be seen in the evening in the corridors, grave as a diplomat, or lolling about in an armchair in front of the gypsy musicians in their tight hussars' jackets and following every move of a boneless Negro dancing a cakewalk. His dinner-jacket is starred with decorations, for Olympio has given command performances before every court in the world.

But what Olympio loves above all is tea-time at five o'clock. When the bell rings there's no holding him. He leaps up, rushes to the nursery and is soon enthroned in the midst of the children at the centre of the great table. This is his finest moment, his time of gluttony and sport. He eats, drinks, stuffs himself, laughs, makes faces, plays pranks, flies into a rage, pulls the steward's hair, tries to eat all the cakes, lick all the sweetmeats and steal from all the plates. The children scream with laughter and clap their hands, and Olympio grows even more excited, He springs on to the table, from there to the back of his chair. He scratches himself, farts, belches, scolds, and, hanging from the ceiling head down, begins to undress. When his master appears he escapes through a porthole, half-buttoned, hilarious, his pants falling down.

Moravagine at once conceived a great admiration for this ape, and now after a few days it's Olympio, the orang-outang, who's training Moravagine.

It's Olympio who comes to get him, makes him exercise, takes him out on deck in the morning for interminable games. They swim, run, ride bicycles, roller-skate and play tennis and golf. I find their vigour irresistible when they burst into the suite like a windstorm, capering, chasing, upsetting furniture and breaking everything in sight until I can't tell if it's the man or the monkey doing the flying trapeze through the drawing-room! I watch them for a while, burst out laughing and then—I, the lazy one—get up to join their play, to be jostled and pushed fully dressed into the swimming-pool. Life is not so bad, and Olympio is a marvellous professor of the carefree.

We become inseparable. Olympio, Moravagine and I mix in with the other passengers. We make a tremendous trio, always up to some devilment. The ape takes us to the ship's store and picks out for us three identical oriole-coloured ties not quite as loud as our hilarity over his choice. Heiligenwehr spends the whole day in the smoking-room, plunged in his search for a never-ending run of successes. He's an inventor with a one-track mind, and he's making up new card-tricks. He's a quiet man whose conversation is studded with riddles, charades and puns. He'll come up to you and say, "What's the difference between . . ." and he sets you a real poser and turns his back without even having smiled. He leaves his ape completely in our care.

Olympio dines in our suite every evening. We have champagne dinners. Real little feasts. When it's time for liqueurs, when our tongues are loosened and Moravagine and I begin at last to reminisce over Mascha, and all that happened in Russia, Olympio listens, half-tipsy, his legs wide apart, smiling beatifically as he alternately, with hand or foot, fumbles beneath his shirt-front and behaves very badly indeed.

Our Rambles in America

To modern man the U.S.A. offers one of the finest spectacles there is. Its busy machine-world makes one think of the prodigious industriousness of prehistoric man. When one dreams within the carcass of a skyscraper or in the pullman of an American super-train,

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one makes the direct acquaintance of the principle of utility.

The principle of utility is the prettiest (and perhaps the only) expression of the law of intellectual consistency envisaged by Remy de Gourmont. It is the principle that governed the dizzying activity of primitive societies. The caveman making a handle for his stone axe, curving it gently to give him a better grip, polishing it lovingly, was obeying the same principle of utility that guides the modern engineer when he builds a scientific curve into the hull of a 40,000-ton transatlantic steamer, bolting it inside to diminish resistance to the water, and incidentally giving this floating city a line that is pleasing to the eye.

Roads, canals, railways, ports, buttresses, sustaining walls and embankments, high-tension wires, water conduits, bridges, tunnels, all these straight and curved lines that dominate the modern landscape impose upon it a kind of grandiose geometry. But the most powerful force in transforming our contemporary landscape is beyond a doubt specialisation in agriculture. In less than fifty years it has changed the face of the earth, guiding its exploitation with astonishing skill. It takes produce, raw materials, plants, animals: grinds and masticates and transforms them. Then it separates them and re-arranges them. With no regard for the nature of a region it implants this or that seed, banishes another, upsets this or that natural economy. Monoculture tends to transform the planet, or at least each one of its zones. Modern agriculture, based on labour-saving principles, and made easier not only by the help of animals but by ever-improved machinery (which, starting with the plough, has its culmination in the newest devices) this more and more scientific agriculture excels in adapting plants to terrain and climate and in giving the soil abundant and rationally distributed fertilisers. In relation to the superabundance of species that grow in nature, it cultivates only a small, though carefully chosen, number. Modern man has a need for simplification that tends to find its expression one way or another. And this artificial monotony which he takes pains to create, this monotony which is slowly taking over the world, this monotony is the sign of our greatness. It bears the mark of a certain willpower, the will to utility; it is the expression of a unity, a law that governs all our modern activity: the Law of Utility.

This law was formulated by engineers. In it all the apparent complexity of contemporary life finds order and precision. It justifies the extremes of industrialisation, and, through it, the newest, most surprising and most unexpected aspects of our civilisation reveal what they share with the peak achievements of the greatest civilisations of all time. For it is thanks to this principle of utility, this law of intellectual consistency, that we can follow back the thread of human activity.

Human life, since its first appearance on earth, has always left traces of its activity. This activity was above all utilitarian. The concrete traces of this activity are not art objects but objects artistically made. In the debris of cooking-areas we find fragments of fashioned bone or shell; in the tertiary and quaternary strata we find chipped flint, polished stones, traces of paintings, roughhewn statues; in tumuli we find hand-made pottery, moulded or turned, sun-dried or oven-baked, decorated by incisions or in relief with troches or lozenges, with colourful barbola or sober lines, covered with abstract decorative motifs, full of invention and infinite variety and often containing the first hints of an alphabet; bell-mouthed pots, pots that are round or nobly tall and slim; all witnesses to a perfected technique, to a civilisation already far advanced and to extraordinarily pure aesthetic intuitions.

These objects are distributed over every region of the globe; we find traces of this activity in areas now inhabited as well as on the surface of lost continents; this feverish activity of thousands upon thousands of generations, stretching over millions of years, is also the sign of a certain willpower, a utilitarian will. It obeys one single motivation, that of utility; and, like our engineers, prehistoric humanity formulated but one principle, that of the Useful.

In the last 25 years, under the pressure of certain problems posed by the natural sciences, all of them touching on the origin, formation, modulation and evolution of life, prehistory has taken shape. Zoologists, botanists, physicists, chemists, biologists, biochemists, mineralogists, astronomers, geologists, all are contributing to the birth of this new knowledge whose early conclusions are so astounding.

It sets the origin of life some 800,000 or 8 million years back. This unfolding of life took place at the North Pole and the South Pole. This first batch of life was cooked up by heliochemical reactions in the form of protoplasmic and protozoan manifestations, going onward to

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the formation of plants and animals. THERE IS NOTHING TO PROVE THAT MAN DID NOT APPEAR IN THIS ENVIRONMENT. It is commonly supposed that civilisation comes from the Orient. What nonsense! The creation and evolution of prehistoric human societies, the settling of the races in the various climates, the invention of fire, of tools and of the arts, the diffusion of religious sentiments and the flowering of the intellect, the great migrations that peopled the earth, all these things develop parallel to evolution, to the transplantation and migration of plants and animals and the great cosmic shifts.

Now, JUST WHAT does prehistory teach us?

There are two centres of intense life, the Arctic and the Antarctic. The polar caps melt away. Two currents of water rush north and south. The equator is flooded. Two oceans take form, spread out and deepen: the Pacific and the Atlantic. New continents emerge, they drift, they merge—in the north, Europe-Siberia, in the south the Africo-Brasilian continent. The great northern current is turned back (we can still find traces of it in the Behring current). The southern current still persists on the western coast of South America (it has been christened the Humboldt current). The water piles up at the equator. It begins to move. The water accumulated at the equator runs off, it runs off towards the Orient. Its enormous mass is attracted by the rising sun. The Amazon, the Gulf Stream, the Mediterranean and the Red Sea later flood Lemuria to form the Indian Ocean. It is at the source of the Amazon that we must seek the cradle of what we call the prehistoric man of the Tertiary and Quaternary, and it is along the banks of this river that we must follow early human migrations.

Here we leave the realm of hypothesis to enter that of the possible.

Our world was populated from Occident to Orient. The stream of generations followed that of the waters, from west to east, attracted by the rising sun, as did the humble plant life, still humid and pale, which turned towards the birth of light, spreading farther and farther eastward, as did the animals, the animals and the birds, in their massive migration. The cradle of modern man lies in Central America, and especially along the banks of the Amazon. It was from here that he left to populate the earth more or less as we see it today, according to the poet's lovely vision:

When the great river Amazon, coming from the West,
Flowed in the midst of Europe's and of Asia's land,
Bearing floating islands big as continents, overloaded with mankind,
Like leaves of giant nenuphars swarming with colonies of frogs....

The cradle of modern man is in Central America. The campfire deposits, the shell-mounds of the Bay of California, the shell-heaps that stud the Atlantic coast, the Argentine paraderos, the Brazilian sambaquis are there to testify to this. These enormous accumulations of debris, piles of shells, of fish-bones, bones of birds and mammifers, big as mountains, prove that groups of humans lived here very early, well before the dawn of history.... And the present direction taken by civilisation, from east to west from Orient to Occident, is only a return to stage one. (This is what is known as History.)

THIS IS WHY (since prehistoric man possessed art-forms, since the caveman could paint frescoes which even today fill us with admiration and astonishment, since the Hyperboreans could engrave soft stones and whale and reindeer bones, make stunningly lifelike portraits of mammoth and aurochs and discover at that early date a graphic formula which is to drawing what stenography is to writing; since the savages of America, Africa and Australia could paint, draw, engrave, sculpt in stone and wood, build huts, temples and forts, sing, dance, make music, make up stories and transmit them orally from the very darkness of time, devoting themselves to a dizzying artistic activity which we still despise but can no longer ignore)—this is why the white race, disembarking in America, discovered as in a single flash the sole and unique principle of human activity, the principle that educates and subjugates: the principle of utility. From that moment on, the white man knows only one dogma: work, anonymous, disinterested work, which is to say *Art*.

On hearing of this, the old cathedral-peoples (the old countries of Europe) awake, are resurrected, regain consciousness, let fall their shackles: libertarian Ireland, imperialist Italy, nationalist Germany, liberal France, Russia, that immense Russia which attempts to create a synthesis of Orient and Occident by reconciling the pacific communism of Buddha with the virulent communism of Karl Marx. From the other side of the ocean new countries, any one

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of which is larger than several countries of Europe and some of which are larger than all Europe put together, turn their backs, disillusioned, on the too-narrow formulae of the old world. Even in the most peaceful, the most neutral, the most inaccessible States one hears the sound of rot giving way: the struggle among faiths; consciences in conflict; new religions stuttering into life; old ones changing skins; theories, fancies and systems everywhere grappling with the principle of utility. We no longer look for an abstract truth but for the true meaning of Life. The human brain has never before had to carry such a current of high-tension ideas. The classical formulae are insufficient, not only in art but in politics and general economics. Everything is cracking, giving way, the most time-honoured stays of society and the most audacious experimental scaffoldings. In the forge of a war of liberation and on the sonorous anvil of the press the whole framework of the body politic is being recast and forged anew.

In this apparent disorder one form of society asserts itself, dominating the tumult. It works, it creates. It transforms all values by its practice of Crash and Boom. It has been capable of rising above contingencies. No classical theory, no abstract conception, no ideology could have foreseen it. It is a formidable force which nowadays embraces the whole world, fashions it and moulds it: modern heavy industry in the form of capitalism.

A Limited Company, anonymous.

It had made use of nothing more than the principle of utility to give the innumerable peoples of the earth an illusion of perfect democracy, of happiness, equality and comfort. Seaports are angular, roads are flat and straight, cities are geometrical. There are canals and railways and finally bridges, bridges in wood and steel, suspended from steel cables. Cube-shaped factories, terrifying machines, a million funny little gadgets that do all the housework. At last we have time to breathe. Automation penetrates daily life. Evolution. Geometric progression of progress. Strict application of an integral law, a law of consistency, the principle of utility, for the engineers who have rediscovered this norm admit no criterion in this social evolution they're pushing, other than the principle of utility. Every day they are creating new machines. Their lines are pure, no salients, only long, solid surfaces instead of tremors and curves: simple, elegant, clean. These characteristics also call for the use of new forms and specially adapted materials: alloyed steel, fibrous glass, nickel and copper bars which marry well and quickly. Blinding lighting-systems. Jointed drive-shafts, crouching chassis, converging lines, water-drop profiles, four-wheel brakes, precious metals in the motors, new materials in the body, large, smooth surfaces: neatness, sobriety, luxury. There's nothing to remind us of the horse-drawn carriage. This is a new combination of lines and forms, a true work of plastic art.

Plastic.

A work of art, an aesthetic work, an anonymous work, designed for the mass, for all men, for life itself, logical conclusion of the principle of usefulness.

Just look at this early aeroplane, whose volume, aerofoil, form, line, colours, material, weight, angles and incidences all are meticulously calculated, the product of pure mathematics. It's the most beautiful possible projection of the human brain. And it's not made to look at in a museum: you can climb in and fly away!

The intellectuals haven't caught up yet, the philosophers still don't realise it, the upper and lower middle classes are too pedestrian to notice, the artists live a life apart, only the immense worker population was really there when the birth of these new forms of life became an everyday thing. They worked to bring them forth, helped in their distribution, adapted to them at once, climbed on the seat, took hold of the wheel and, despite the cries of horror and protest, drove away in these new forms of life at top speed, making havoc of flower-beds and of the categories of time and space.

The machines are here, with their fine optimism.

They are like a prolongation of the herd personality, the realisation of its most intimate thoughts, its most obscure tendencies, its most powerful appetities; they are its sense of orientation, its highest form, its equilibrium, not external realities endowed with animalistic faculties, not fetishes, not superior animals.

To the American people belongs the honour of having rediscovered the principle of utility in its innumerable applications, the most elementary of which have already upset the applecart of life, of thought and of the human heart.

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Pragmatism.

A disc is no longer a circle: it becomes a wheel.

And the wheel goes round.

It gives birth to drills, titanic shafts, monstrous tubes 32 feet long with a 90 centimetre bore.

Its prodigious labours make relatives of countries geographically and historically foreign to each other by making them resemble one another: Aden, Dakar, Algiers: ports of call; Bombay, Hong Kong: trans-shipping ports; Boston, New York, Barcelona, Rotterdam, Antwerp: outlets for industrial regions. The caravans of 10,000, or 15,000 camels that lined the trails of Timbuktu with a pay load of 1,500 tons are replaced by cargo ships of 20,000 tons jamming ports imposed on a nasty piece of coastline, and in eight days the twenty thousand tons of goods reach the ancient market by raft, vedette-boat and trailer-trucks, by rail, by caterpillar, by air.

And the wheel goes round.

It engenders a new language. Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, our friend Charles-Albert Cingria, Herr Schoen of the Deutsche Bank, Monsieur Emile Lopart of the Joint Steel Works, General Olifant and his attendant suite, de Koelke the importer, along with workers, merchants, civil servants, colonists, and thousands upon thousands of other customers take to the black and pink steamers, or all white, or green and red, or all yellow, or grey and blue, belonging to the Holland America Line, or the Canadian Pacific, or Favre & Co., or Nippon-Yousen-Kaïsha, or P.M., or T.K.K., or White Star, or New Zealand Shipping, or Lloyd Sabaudo, or Veloce, Norddeutsche Lloyd or Tchernikovskaya Kommerskaya Flott, or even the Fraissinet Packet or the Chargeurs, and set off from Victoria for Hong Kong (*4,283 miles in ten days*) or from San Francisco to Sydney via Honolulu and Suwa, Auckland and New Guinea, or from Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, Dunkirk, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Lisbon, Genoa, to Quebec, Halifax, New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Vera Cruz, Caracas, Rio, Santos, La Plata; while in Djibouti, amid shouting and moonlight, the enormous tarpaulins of the Thursday courier head for Mombasa, Zanzibar, Mayotte, Mazunga, Nossihé, Tamatave, La Réunion, Mauritius; and in Dakar, in the bright sun and amid the thudding jostling of heavy barques, the Wednesday morning courier sails for Konakry, Grand Bassam, Petit Popo, Grand Popo, and Libreville.

YES, IN ALL THIS tremendous industry, amid all this cotton, rubber, coffee, rice, cork, peanuts, these litanies of Pustet, this pig-iron, this 2/10ths wire, these sheep, these canned goods, these crates of chickens, this fridge, these Sacred Heart medals, these Liszt rhapsodies, this phosphate, these bananas, these steel beams, the language—of words and things, of discs and runes, Portuguese and Chinese, numbers and trade marks, industrial patents, postage stamps, passenger tickets, bills of lading, signal codes, wireless radio—the language is refashioned and takes on body, this language that is the reflection of human consciousness, the poetry that makes known the image of the mind conceiving it, the lyricism that is a way of being and feeling, the demotic writing stimulated by the cinema which speaks to the impatient mass of the illiterate, the papers which bypass grammar and syntax in order to give the eye a more striking picture in the typographical make-up of their advertisements, the touching price beneath a tie for sale in a window, the multicoloured posters and the giant letters that prop up the hybrid architectures of the cities and straddle the streets, the new electrical constellations that climb each night into the sky, the alphabet-book of smoking chimneys in the morning wind.

Today.

Profundity of today.

Everything is changing proportions, angle, point of view. All things rush away, rush in again, accumulate, become scarce, laugh, insist and grow exasperated. The products of the ends of the earth find their way on to a single plate or into a single dress. We feed on the sweat of gold with every meal, with every kiss. All things are artificial and real. The eyes. The hand. The immense fur coat of figures in which the banks sprawl and revel. The sexual fury of the factories. The wheel that goes around. The wing that glides. The voice that travels on a wire. The ear in a paper cone. Orientation. Rhythm. Life.

All stars are twins. If the mind staggers at the thought of the infinitely small which we have just discovered, how can the heart fail to be shattered by the same discovery?

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Lewis S. Feuer

Karl Marx
and the Promethean Complex

MARX FOUNDED his life on a Promethean dedication to a war against the reigning gods. He thought that with the help of his materialistic conception of history, he would, like Prometheus, unravel the law of man's future. At the end, however, brooding over his life's work, he was haunted by the fear that he had been enthralled by a delusion. He found a portrayal of his own state of mind in a short story of Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece*; it "made a deep impression on him," wrote Paul Lafargue (his son-in-law) "because it was in part a description of his own feelings." In the story, a fanatical old man has worked for many years on the painting of a courtesan which, he realises finally, "is no painting," but "a sentiment, a passion"; his research has led him "to doubt the very existence of the objects of his search"; knowledge, he then realises, "brings you to a negation"; when he at last shows his painting to two admirers, all they perceive is a confusion of fantastical lines: "Nothing! Nothing! After ten years of work. . . ." That night he commits his canvas to the flames, a last rite of "the fire of Prometheus," and dies. Thus Marx too wondered whether his Promethean fixation had distorted his perception of things. Was his own materialistic conception of history, after he had superposed all the amendments and qualifications, finally a confusion of sociological causal lines without resemblance to that picture of a transfigured working class and humanity which he had set out to paint?

The Promethean myth dominated Marx's thinking from his adolescent years on. It brought with it an emphasis on struggle, on defiance of the gods. "Prometheus is the noblest of saints and martyrs in the calendar of philosophy," wrote Marx in his doctoral dissertation (1834), and he proclaimed his life's theme in the dramatic lines from Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*: "In sooth all gods I hate." "I shall never exchange my fetters for slavish servility. 'Tis better to be chained to the rock than bound to the service of Zeus."[1] The identification with Prometheus extended to Marx's intellectual perspective. Where Prometheus declared:

All is known to me
All, all that is to be

Marx claimed to have grasped the law of motion of capitalism. He gave himself willingly to penury and suffering, bringing knowledge to mankind as Prometheus:

Mine offence
Was wilful. I avouch it willingly
Rescuing mankind, I plunged myself in woe.

With Prometheus, Marx affirmed that the technical arts were the mainspring of man's progress, and when he was physically tormented, his ailment was identical with that with which Zeus afflicted Prometheus—a sickness of the liver.

[1] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *On Religion* (Moscow, 1957), p. 15.

THIS *was the 150th anniversary year of the birth in Trier of Karl Marx.*

Professor LEWIS FEUER *is the editor of an anthology of the writings of Marx and Engels (Anchor Books, 1963), and author of* Spinoza and The Rise of Liberalism *(1958) and* The Scientific Intellectual—The Psychological and Sociological Origins of Modern Science *(1963). He contributed a study of Marx and his daughter entitled* "Marxian Tragedians" *to the November 1962* ENCOUNTER. *Formerly at the University of California in Berkeley, he is at present lecturing at the University of Toronto.*

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A PROMETHEAN COMPLEX came to pervade Marx's everyday deeds and attitudes; every action, even the most trivial, was perceived under the aspect of struggle. When he urged his friends to learn languages, Spanish, Greek, it was not by way of extolling their beautiful literatures; rather he said: "A foreign language is a weapon in the struggle for life." His books, he proclaimed, were his "slaves," and must serve his will, and he gave judgment upon their authors: "I mete out historical justice, and render to each man his due." To be defeated in a game of chess plunged him into utter despondency; it was a struggle lost. And when, in exile, he took up fencing, "what he lacked in science," as Liebknecht said, "he tried to make up in aggressiveness." In a curious way, the same was true of Marx's theory of history.

To Marx, with his Promethean emotional *a priori*, struggle was the law of existence. Contrary to the tradition which from Empedocles to Freud has perceived reality as a dual encounter between love and aggression, for Marx, aggression became all-encompassing. When an American journalist, John Swinton, interviewed him in 1880, he asked "the most ultimate question, 'What is?'" Thereupon Marx gazed "upon the roaring sea in front and the restless multitude upon the beach," and then, "in deep and solemn tone, he replied *'Struggle'*." This was his ultimate metaphysical category and indeed his highest value. A half-playful questionnaire of his daughters brought the responses: "Your idea of happiness—To fight." "The vice you detest most—Servility." Marx would have said: "I struggle; therefore I am."

The Dramatic Script

THE PROMETHEAN COMPLEX determined a philosophy of history; as Prometheus warned Zeus of the "son more puissant than his sire" who would bring him down "from his throne of parental sovereignty," so Marx enunciated the warning to all established powers, the all-defiant generalisation—all history is a history of class struggles, and the working class, growing to maturity, would end forever all class exploitation.

At crucial points, Promethean emotion overcame Marx's sense of logic, of evidence, of proof. Though he was aware how Hegel's dialectical transitions often rested fragilely on "puns," on arbitrary wishes, his own emotions likewise rather than evidence guided the presumable direction of the qualitative leaps of social systems. In a letter of 1852, for instance, Marx indicated what he thought his scientific achievement had been:

> Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: (*1*) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with particular, historic phases in the development of production; (*2*) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; (*3*) that the dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society.

What is astounding, of course, is that Marx thought he had proved these three propositions, that a few paragraphs in the *Communist Manifesto*, some scattered passages in his early writings, sufficed to prove three propositions which embraced all past social systems and which predicted that of the future. If "Prometheus" signified literally "he who knows in advance," then Marx was being swept on by fervour to substitute prophecy for science. The forecast of proletarian dictatorship and the advent of a classless society rested on an extrapolation from the slenderest of empirical foundations, but the minimum of factual evidence was matched with a maximum of Promethean projection. History, in his unconscious, was a drama of retribution and justice, and he was rendering judgment in Zeus' place on the evil and good. In 1856 Marx, responding to a toast, *"The Proletarians of Europe,"* articulated the Promethean apocalypse.

> To take vengeance for the misdeeds of the ruling class there existed in the Middle Ages in Germany a secret tribunal called the *Vehmgericht*. If a red cross was seen marked on a house, the people knew that its owner was doomed by the *Vehm*. All the houses of Europe are now marked by the mysterious red cross. History is the judge; its executioner, the proletarian.

And Marx was presumably the prosecutor, or if you will, the clerk of the court.

A LIFE FOUNDED ON myth, however, entails its repeated collisions with reality. In Marx's case, experience itself was to be the great de-mythologiser. Historical materialism was altered, recast, and supplemented with new variables; war, race, individual decision, social inertia, intellectual élitism, generational conflicts, the power of ideas, all took on a new significance as factors in social changes often more important than the economic. Marx, as Liebknecht observed, was especially a victim of the "prophesying imp"; his friends ridiculed him for it, and it made him "grimly mad." Insensibly, however, the myths began to recede under the cumulative pressure of events. The failure of prophesy was Marx's trauma. In 1849, in the

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first months of his London exile, he was absolutely certain that the social revolution would resume in a few months. In 1850, he was writing that "the revolution is imminent." Engels was reassuring him that the capitalist system was at the end of its tether: "There are no more new markets to open . . . it is obvious that the domination of the factory-owners has reached its end. What then? . . . Social revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, say we."

When catastrophe was delayed, Marx scanned the sociological skies in far-away regions. The Taiping Rebellion in China moved him to write in 1853 that "the Chinese revolution will give off the sparks into the greatly charged mine of the modern industrial system and will bring about the explosion prepared long ago by the general crisis which, when it spreads abroad, will be directly followed by political revolutions on the continent." When this breakdown failed to take place, Engels brought the comforting hope in 1856 that the Russian capital expansion would "soon lead to a crash." He wrote Marx that "when we hear of the great Irkutsk road with branches to Peking, it will be time to pack up our bags. This time there will be an unprecedented crash; all the elements are present. . . ." Marx indeed felt in that year (1856) that a broad European crisis was at hand, and that his revolutionary vocation would be realised: "I do not think we shall be able to sit here as spectators much longer. Even the fact that I have at last got to the point of furnishing a house again and sending for my books, proves to me that the 'mobilisation' of our persons is at hand." Engels responded in joyful anticipation; soon, he expected, he would be taking up arms again:

> The crisis will do as much good physically as a sea-bathe, I can see that already. In 1848 we said: "Now our time is coming"—and in a certain sense it came, but now it is coming altogether, now it will be a fight for life. This makes my military studies more practical at once.

Even as the crisis of 1857 receded, Marx feared that his economic studies would soon be rendered unnecessary and obsolete by the quick advent of socialism. To Engels he wrote in December 1857 that he was "working like mad all through the nights putting my economic studies together so that I may at least have the outlines clear before the deluge comes. . . ." He confided to Lassalle in 1858 that he had a "presentiment" that now, "after fifteen years of study" had given him a grasp of his subject, "stormy movements from without will probably interfere." He consoled himself: "Never mind. If I get finished so late that I no longer find the world ready to pay attention to such things, the fault will obviously be my own." "On the Continent a revolution is imminent," wrote Marx in 1858, "and will also immediately assume a socialist character." But, he wondered, would it survive in view of the fact that in "a far greater territory" of the globe, presumably Asia, "the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant?" He saw history in terms of tocsins and clarion calls, of harbingers and portents. The American Civil War, he wrote in *Capital*, sounded the "tocsin" for the European working class. It was Promethean dramatic myth looking for its cue; the substance of history is not, however, transcribed into a dramatic script.

The Last Great War Dance

INVARIABLY, Marx and Engels believed that their historical materialism had endowed them with a Promethean foreknowledge. Marx pondered the class origins of President Andrew Johnson, and was convinced he would pursue a revolutionary policy: "Johnson is stern, inflexible, revengeful and as a former poor white has a deadly hatred of the oligarchy." Engels expected that after two generations the Negroes would merge with the whites. Always they looked to the mode of production to give them the key to events, and almost always the key failed to fit. The eccentric David Urquhart, Marx's friend, told him that his notion of a "logic of events" was just as "senseless" as the "justice of a locomotive." Marx found this hard to accept, but he twisted the logic with each turn of the events, adding his epicycles to the grand simplicity of his law of social evolution. Engels to the end of his days continued to prophesy. In 1886, he was "watching the present development of the present crisis" in America, and saw no likelihood of a resolution of the "chronic overproduction" of England, America, and Germany. Two years later, a short visit to Canada, seen through the categories of historical materialism, left him certain that "in ten years this sleepy Canada will be ripe for annexation—the farmers in Manitoba, etc., will demand it themselves." Finally, at the time of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, he predicted confidently that Chinese capitalist competition would rapidly "give an impetus to the overthrow of capitalism in Europe and America."

The Bible tells how Jonah was angry with God because He did not fulfil Jonah's prophecy of the destruction of Nineveh; Jonah's was the first instance of a self-nullifying prophecy, and the Book of Jonah, in effect, called for an end to prophecy as many today have called for an end to ideology. Marx did not abandon Prome-

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thean foreknowledge when events withheld their confirmation, but he began reluctantly to revise his premises. Like Moses before him, like Trotsky after him, he realised that the Promethean role he cast upon the workers was a mythological drama rather than a social reality. We must say to the workers, he said in 1850:

> You will have to go through fifteen or twenty or fifty years of civil wars and international wars not only in order to change extant conditions, but also in order to change yourselves and to render yourselves fit for political dominion.

But it was an ominous new note for Marx the foreseer. Angered by the frustration of history, he looked now not to the dialectical law of the decline of capitalist economy but to war as the prime mover of human history. War, not economic evolution, would transform men's characters, and destroy old systems, and create new ones. Every frustrated prophet finally appeals to cosmic aggression, his own anger projected as a historical force. In such a mood, Marx literally identified himself with Moses:

> The present generation is like the Jews, whom Moses led through the wilderness. It has not only a new world to conquer, it must go under, in order to make room for the men who are fit for a new world.

By contrast, Engels sought for more prosaic explanations for their defeat; for one, chance had intervened in the form of the discovery of gold in California, which had quickened the vitality of the capitalist order; but apart from all chance, Engels acknowledged, they had simply misjudged the developmental powers of European capitalism; almost fifty years after 1848, in 1895, he recognised that the tremendous economic growth throughout the continent showed that they had been moved by a revolutionary emotion rather than a scientific insight: "History has proved us, and all who thought like us, wrong."

As Marx watched crises subside, and the economic dialectic persisted in failing him, he turned in desperation more and more to War as the redeeming agency in history. Only some drastic dislocation could bring him and his friends to power, and he began to welcome war as the dislocating and liberating factor. In a military breakdown, a revolution might take place which ordinary economic forces were incapable of generating. It was an emotional-thought pattern typical of the *finimundialist* (end-of-the-world-ist) whose prognosis has been confuted. When the commercial crisis of 1857, for instance, failed to bring a universal collapse, Marx and Engels hoped in 1859 for a general European war which would bring a Russian defeat and an emergence of communist leadership. Marx welcomed the Franco-Prussian War in 1870, and wanted Bismarck to defeat Louis Napoleon; a German victory, he felt, would mean German hegemony in the international socialist movement, and a setback for the French Proudhonists. Consequently, Marx was angry with his follower and friend, Wilhelm Liebknecht, for refusing in the *Reichstag* to vote for Bismarck's war credits. A kind of historical militarism tended to supersede historical materialism. In the spring of 1874 Marx was expecting again that the European workers' movement would be resurrected through a war: "We must go through it [a European war] before there can be any thought of the European classes having decisive influence." And Engels towards the end of his life foresaw a war in which millions of soldiers massacred each other, devastating the whole of Europe more "than any swarm of locusts," and with "one result absolutely certain: general exhaustion and the establishment of the conditions for the ultimate victory of the working class."

This was the ultimate Promethean vision, for Prometheus' shackles would be unbound by war; and Marx made a cult of Shelley. Engels with supreme confidence declaimed: "This, my lords, princes and statesmen, is where in your wisdom you have brought old Europe. And when nothing more remains to you but to open the last great war dance—that will suit us all right."

The last great war dance, and out of the catastrophe: revolutionary socialism. It was an amalgam of a Promethean death-wish and transfiguration run wild, and could make no claim to science. For war, as Engels well knew in his less mythopoeic moods, had frequently in the past simply destroyed societies utterly and completely. He had noted as far back as 1853 how wars had extirpated whole Eastern societies,

> . . . the otherwise curious fact that whole stretches which were once brilliantly cultivated are now waste and bare (Palmyra, Petra, the ruins in the Yemen, districts in Egypt, Persia, and Hindustan); it explains the fact that one single devastating war could depopulate a country for centuries and strip it of its whole civilisation.

War, moreover, was not only the destroyer of social systems; it imposed its character on social foundations. Serfdom, for example, according to Marx and Engels in the maturity of their reflections, did not arise from any technological or economic necessity; rather it came into being

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as a well-nigh universal relationship of conquerors to conquered.

> I am glad that on the history of serfdom we "proceed in agreement" [wrote Engels to Marx in 1882]. It is certain that serfdom and bondage are not a peculiarly medieval-feudal form, we find them everywhere or nearly everywhere where conquerors have the land cultivated for them by the old inhabitants....

"The feudal system," Engels wrote for the *New American Cyclopaedia*, was "in its very origin a military organisation...." War, and not the mode of production, imposed aggressive social relations on the social system, or in other cases, produced defensive social formations. The economic relations were a continuation of war among peoples.

Race & Russia

BESIDE THE QUESTION of War was that of Race. Marx could never fit its facts securely into his materialistic conception of history, and the marriage of his daughter, Laura, to Paul Lafargue, a Negro (by American conventions), raised it for him in a most poignant way. To begin with there was the question whether the Southern slave system was the outcome of technological requirements or whether, as de Tocqueville had suggested, it arose not from any technological necessity but simply because a stronger or superior race was exploiting a weaker or inferior one. Marx at first regarded slavery as an economically necessary development, writing, for instance, in 1846 that "without slavery North America, the most progressive country, would be transformed into a patriarchal land." In his more mature years, however, race took on the status of an independent, autonomous variable. He declared in a *New York Tribune* article of which Ralph Waldo Emerson took special notice that in the "silent revolution" which was taking place, and which was as indifferent to human existence as an earthquake, those "races, too weak to master the new conditions of life must give way." This was an extreme theory of racial selection and determinism, but this view of 1853 became characteristic of Marx. Evidently he thought a great deal about the question of racial inferiority when in 1866 Laura became engaged to Lafargue. A grandson of a San Domingo mulatto and a Caribbean Indian was to become his son-in-law. Marx mocked at him as *"cette caboche de nègre,"* though later in introducing him to Theodor Cuno, an Internationalist who was going to America, he said: "You may do there what one of my daughters has done towards solving the colour question, by marrying a nigger...."[2] Yet, in the very same letter in which Marx told Engels of his daughter's betrothal, he also stated his views on racial theories and the relative inferiority of the Negro. He was especially enthusiastic over the notions of the French anthropologist Trémaux who maintained "that the common Negro type was a degeneration from a quite higher one," and that racial difference in abilities, as between the Slavic and Lithuanian, were naturally caused by differences in the earth's soil. Marx thought that Trémaux's racial anthropology was a tremendous advance over Darwin: "In the historical and practical application more important and richer than Darwin." And something of this standpoint was smuggled into historical materialism itself by the hurried statement in *Capital* that the productivity of labour is dependent not only on the social structure but also on the "constitution of man himself (race, etc.)...."

When Marx thus recognised in racial struggles an independent factor in history, he was taking one more step in the basic transformation of historical materialism. No longer could one say with a grand generality that all history was a history of class struggles, for racial antagonisms were not reducible to those of class, and moreover, Warfare rather than the Mode of Production could be the critical determining force; indeed, less advanced races, nomads, for instance, could destroy the more advanced but sedentary ones in cities and farms.

WITH WAR AND RACE upsetting the schemas of the materialistic conception of history, a third major challenge came from Russia, a backward country which Marx had despised, but which in the 1870s was placing revolution on its agenda. When Marx wrote *Capital*, he still believed in a universal law of social evolution. He could justify his preoccupation with Britain's industrial development on the grounds that "the country that is more developed industrially only shows to the less developed the image of its own future." To backward countries he could say in Promethean fashion: *De te fabula narratur!* From shortly after 1848 he maintained that conspirators were "the alchemists of the revolution," and that their artificially conjured crises could never accelerate the course of social development. The Russian case shattered both Marx's belief in a law of evolutionary sequence, and his impersonalism, his view that individual interventions could not affect the underlying drift of events.

For Marx could not bring himself to deny to the Russian socialists of the 1870s the hope

[2] Cuno, *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels* (Moscow), p. 212.

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that their revolution could enable their country to skip the bourgeois stage of development, and enter directly upon socialism. So Marx declared in 1877 that Russia had "the finest chance ever offered by history to a people" to avoid undergoing "all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist régime." What, then, of his Promethean warning, *De te fabula narratur?* "My historical sketch of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe," answered Marx, was not to be metamorphosed

> into a historico-philosophic theory of the general path every people is fated to tread, whatever the historical circumstances in which it finds itself, in order that it may ultimately arrive at the form of economy which ensures... the most complete development of man.

Thus with one sentence Marx took leave of the universal evolutionary law which he had once regarded as the core of historical materialism. For in 1859 he had held plainly that there was a necessary succession of "epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society," none of which ever disappeared "before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed." And his dialectic method, he reiterated as late as 1873, was nothing but the law of "the necessity of successive determinate orders of social conditions." The succession of social systems was now losing its necessity; Marx scrapped the dialectical law to accommodate the revolutionary will. But his social science henceforth was at odds with the Promethean myth, for he was sacrificing foreknowledge to revolutionary hope and contingency.

Marx muted his economic impersonalism before the idealistic personalism of the Russian terrorists, who revived a critical problem which the Marx of 1848 had himself never satisfactorily resolved. No practising revolutionist wishes to bind himself to an evolutionary time-table for social change. All his instincts drive him to act, to grasp for power and to use it for his goals. Marx's comrades of 1848 after their defeat looked askance at his withdrawal into study while he waited for history to ripen the revolutionary fruit. The job of a revolutionist was revolution, thought August Willich; and he regarded Marx's view that social classes must await their turn to rule as an absurdity. He did not propose to have the working class sit back until the bourgeoisie finally acted its assigned part. Marx, the aloof scholar, whose contact with workers was limited to lecturing them, could afford to sit back admonishing them to conform their initiative to his "laws of social science." Andreas Gottschalk, the leader of the Left Wing, berated Marx for his "heartlessness," and as early as February 1849 scorned Marx's insistence that a bourgeois revolution must come first.

"What is the purpose of such a revolution? Why should we, men of the proletariat, spill our blood for this?" Such stage-theorists, said Gottschalk, "are not in earnest about the salvation of the oppressed. The distress of the workers, the hunger of the poor have only a scientific, doctrinaire interest for them." The activist workers no doubt remembered the sad fact that Marx and Engels in 1848 had suppressed their *Communist Manifesto* because they preferred to court the liberal bourgeoisie rather than to agitate among the workers for revolution. Marx thought getting money from the liberal establishment for his newspaper was more important than giving the *Communist Manifesto* to the workers. "If a single copy of our seventeen points were distributed here," wrote Engels, "as far as we are concerned all would be lost." The proletarian revolution, Marx and Engels argued, would have to await its turn until the bourgeois stage had had its full innings. And the *Communist Manifesto* in such circumstances was, Marx and Engels felt, a sectarian document, a programme prematurely born. The German revolutionary activists believed in the *Manifesto* more than did its authors.

The new generation of Russian activists, similarly unwilling to prostrate themselves and their people before an alleged law of history, deeply stirred the old Marx. Several of the *Narodnaya Volya* (People's Will) in 1879 and 1880 on escaping abroad were received in Marx's home. Then when Alexander II was assassinated, Marx wrote his daughter Jenny that terror was an "historically inevitable means of action," the morality of which was as useless to discuss as "the earthquake at Chios." The Russian Terrorists, he said, were "excellent people through and through, *sans phrase mélodramatique*, simple, straightforward, heroic." Engels, broadening the framework of historical materialism to include the efficacy of conspiracy, wrote a few years later in 1885 that Russia was

> one of the exceptional cases where it is possible for a handful of people to make a revolution, *i.e.*, with one little push to cause a whole social system, which... is in more than labile equilibrium, to come crashing down.... Well now—if ever Blanquism—the fantastic idea of overturning an entire society by the action of a small conspiracy—had a certain *raison d'être*, that is certainly so now in Petersburg....

Thus, the materialistic conception of history, with its massive, large-scale, impersonal processes, founded on the movements of the mode

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of production, was relaxed to include a revolution accomplished by historical idealism, by the free determination of a few individuals imposing their will on history. What was being left of the sweeping bold lines of Marx's theory as he re-touched it like Balzac's painter to account for the realities of war, race, and the actions of conspirator intellectuals in backward Russia?

The Primitivist Myth

MEANWHILE, from another intellectual source, the development of anthropological science, Marx was experiencing a singular attack on the foundation of historical materialism. The new science was bringing consciously to the fore the significance of mythology and the irrational side of man. Marx and Engels, at a loss how to accommodate these new findings to their standpoint, in effect decided to exempt primitive societies from the workings of historical materialism. Primitive society, too, raised for Marx questions of sexuality in history, in particular the status of incest. This theoretical problem coincided in his own personal life with a crisis in his relations with his beloved youngest daughter, Eleanor, whose career and love choices he opposed; Eleanor sustained several nervous breakdowns. The interpretation of primitive society became a domain for Marx's fantasy-life, in which the irrational sources of his own Promethean myth came close to the surface.

It was the Russian scholar, Maxim Kovalevsky, who placed in Marx's hands on his return from America a copy of Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*. Then Marx got hold of the writings of the American historian, H. H. Bancroft, on the West Coast Indians. Soon Engels was writing to Marx in 1882 that the evidence proved that "at this stage the type of production is less decisive than the degree in which the old blood bonds and the old mutual community of the sexes within the tribe have been dissolved." As Engels put it a few years later, as far as primitive society was concerned, what was primary was their false conceptions of nature; he was, he might say, a Comtist in his interpretation of primitive existence:

> These various false conceptions of nature, of man's own being, magic forces, etc., have for the most part only a negative economic basis; but the low economic development of the prehistoric period is supplemented and also partially conditioned and even caused by the false conceptions of nature.

While still maintaining that "economic necessity was the main driving force of the progressive knowledge of nature," he felt it "would surely be pedantic to try and find economic causes for all this primitive nonsense." Thus, the primitive world, with its myths and magic, was consigned to an irrational realm, beyond historical materialism. The Marxist world-view itself, however, was thereby almost rent asunder. For primitive men also experience "economic necessities"; withal their world-schemes are mythological. What then is signified by their "negative economic basis"? Was the primitive response to material problems irrational because their "false conceptions" had a primary determining role? And if myths and irrationality can have this status in primitive existence, why may they not have the determining role in modern history?

Marx and Engels found themselves in a quandary furthermore, as they tried to explain the Sociological Fall from primitive, communistic, stateless existence into a society of class oppression, private property, and exploitation. For if the materialistic conception were true, if the tribal communistic existence determined the tribal consciousness, how had the Fall, with its greed, avarice, and selfishness, made its appearance? There had taken place, said Engels (and Marx similarly):

> a fall from the simple moral greatness of the old gentile society. The lowest interests—base greed, brutal appetites, sordid avarice, selfish robbery of the common wealth—inaugurate the new, civilised class society.

How such Evil could have been nurtured in the bosom of the Good was something of a psychological *creatio ex nihilo*. There was no serpent to blame for this ouster from the Political Garden of Eden. A Primitivist myth was beginning to contaminate the Promethean.

Meanwhile, Marx was especially concerned to insist that in the primitive innocence, sexual incest had been the rule. If Engels liked to dwell on pristine free love, Marx was rather drawn to the delights of incest. When Richard Wagner doubted that brother embraced sister as bride, Marx replied in 1882: "In primitive times the sister was the wife, and *that was moral*." When Bachofen considered punaluan marriage "lawless," Marx retorted that primitive man would likewise have regarded contemporary cousin-marriages as "incestuous." Engels was confident that among the Australian aborigines "sexual intercourse between parents and children was still not felt to be particularly horrible," though he conceded there were no such actual Australian instances. It was all a bit confused but somehow incest was to be included in the primitivist fantasy.

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The Challenge of Mill

FINALLY, MARX'S MANY YEARS of residence in England brought home to him another problem for his materialistic conception of history. England was above all the country where measures of social reform were being gradually enacted, and where "governments and parliaments periodically appointed commissions of enquiry into economic conditions," armed with "plenary powers to get at the truth," and where there was a corps of factory inspectors, "competent... free from partisanship and respect of persons...." Evidently then ethical principles and conscience had a certain autonomy in determining the economic structure of society. And thus Marx found himself not quite able to deal with John Stuart Mill's challenge to historical materialism.

For Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy* had above all emphasised that society's distribution of the national product depends on decisions which are not determined by the mode of production. Its ethical values and choices could determine its laws of distribution. Here was a doctrine of sociological voluntarism. Society, according to Mill, was not a system in which the different institutions stood in one-to-one relations of interdependence; rather there were alternatives from which the human will could choose. As Mill stated it—although the laws of production "partake of the character of physical truths," like the law of diminishing returns, with "nothing optional or arbitrary in them," it was quite otherwise with the laws of distribution: "Unlike the laws of Production, they are a matter of human institution solely. The things once there, mankind, individually or collectively, can do with them as they like." The distribution of wealth, wrote Mill, "is very different in different ages and countries; and might be still more different, if mankind so chose."

If mankind so chose—these words of Mill contravened Marx's historical materialism. For Marx had to hold that the mode of distribution was determined by the mode of production, "in the last analysis" the technological foundation. His whole conviction that he had "proved" that the class structure of any given society was determined by its technical base was at stake. Marx coped with Mill's problem, writing several drafts of an answer which found their way into the last pages of the third volume of *Capital*. He clearly was at a loss for an answer, for he fell back on a verbal dodge. He declared that the laws of distribution were just another name for the laws of production:

> The conditions of distribution are essentially identical with these conditions of production, being their reverse side, so that both conditions share the same historical and passing character.

But then what happened to his alleged proof "that the existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production"? Was all this simply a matter of words? What Marx indeed was doing was playing on the ambiguity of "mode of production" which can refer, on the one hand, to the given technology, and on the other, to the socio-economic relations among people. By smuggling the forms of distribution into the meaning of "mode of production" as socio-economic relations, he claimed that it was identical with the "conditions of production." But this, of course, provided no empirical argument whatsoever for the claim that the forms of distribution were determined by the technical foundation.

Marx found himself unable to answer John Stuart Mill.

The Empirics of Reform

MARX therefore began to move away from his own sociological determinism to something closer to sociological voluntarism. This was above all shown by the character and method of his last published work. To put it simply, Marx turned from the dialectical method to survey research. Instead of trying to prove the necessary end of capitalist society and the necessity of Revolution, he appealed (in France) to the socialists of all schools to emulate the example of the bourgeois British government, and by helping to collect the facts concerning the workers' existence thereby contribute to needed reforms. The dialectical, revolutionary phraseology was finally cast aside. One could work for practical amelioration within the setting of the given mode of production; the forms of distribution were not the reverse side of the mode of production; there were degrees of freedom for intervention within and alteration of the socio-economic relations. It was all stated by Marx in a preface to a questionnaire of 101 items which he published in *La Revue Socialiste* in April 1881:

> The infamies of capitalist exploitation, exposed in the official investigations instituted by the British government; the legislation which these revelations compelled to be passed (limitation by law of the working day to ten hours, and the law concerning female and child labour, etc.) have made the French bourgeoisie still more fearful of the dangers which such an impartial and systematic investigation might conjure up.

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> ... we shall endeavour to launch such a questionnaire with the meagre funds at our disposal. In this we hope to receive the support of all urban and rural workers, who realise that they alone, with full knowledge of the causes, can describe the misery which they endure, that they alone, and no redeemer sent by Providence, can energetically apply the remedies to the social maladies from which they suffer. We count also on the socialists of all schools, who desiring social reforms, must know exactly and positively the conditions under which the working class ... works. ...
>
> This collection of labour data is the first task which socialist democracy must perform in order to prepare the social renovation.

Evidently nothing came of Marx's attempt to bring survey research to the socialist movement. In his last years, however, his work was merging with those new currents of inquiry which by the close of that decade were to see the publication in 1889 of the first volume of Charles Booth's *Life and Labour of the People of London*. Dialectical arguments were giving way to empirical facts.

THUS MARX'S PROMETHEAN COMPLEX evolved as his mythopoeic compulsion was confronted with the realities of historical defeat, with the failures of the working class to live up to the role which he assigned them, and the failure of the capitalist system to fulfil his prophecies. War, Race, and human irrationality thrust themselves on him. Finally, he himself became tired of mythology, of ideology, and turned to the prosaic inquiry of the survey researcher, with more modest aims of social reform.

Yet Marx's Promethean complex demands an understanding. He became the symbol of the intellectual joining his lot with the working class for the achievement of revolutionary goals. In a general way, Marx's Promethean complex was one symbolic of the weaknesses and strengths of intellectuals. Let us therefore try to comprehend the character of this enigmatic man.

Theory and Practice

MARX WAS a professed fighter, a man of struggle. But no one among the 19th-century intellectuals seems to have been so utterly passive and incapable of taking the minimum actions to sustain himself and his family. With his children suffering and sometimes dying in his penury, with his wife rushing about desperately and borrowing money from a French refugee to pay for their child's coffin, one would have thought that this man of struggle would have tried to "get a job." Perhaps he might have presented himself, as others did, as a candidate for teaching, of German literature or economic history, at the University of London. To get a job was virtually unthinkable for Marx. Only once in his life did he try to do so. As he wrote in December 1862, "to keep myself and my family off the streets," he had finally decided "to become a 'practical man'", and applied for a position in a railway office. "Shall I call it good luck or bad? I did not get the post because of my bad handwriting."

This Promethean who exalted struggle in myth and fantasy was himself the most helpless of men. He stated in 1859 that he would not allow bourgeois society to turn him into a "money-making machine," but apart from the sacrifice he imposed on his family, there was a loss of self-respect, of manhood, in his readiness to live upon others' largess. To get *Capital* published, he went in 1861 for money to his Dutch uncle, the capitalist Philips; ten years later he was appealing to his cousin August Philips to share in the cost of the translation. Above all there was the life-long ambiguity of his relationship with Engels. Nobody has yet calculated how much money Engels gave him, but the annual sums were occasionally near £1,000. Marx's wife was said to have regarded Engels as his evil genius, while Jung, an old disciple, "thought that Marx could not oppose Engels because Marx's family depended for years on the financial help they received from Engels. But this was a subject Jenny was most reluctant to talk about." With good reason. For on the one occasion when relations between the two friends were strained by Marx's unfeelingness at the death of Engels' companion, Mary Burns, Marx blamed it in part on "her hysterical behaviour" which "made me capable of thrusting my private needs on you. ..."

Engels for his part led a strangely dual existence. In the daytime he was the diligent businessman in his father's Manchester firm, Ermen & Engels, working faithfully from 1850 to 1869. There is no record, by the way, that he ever did anything about organising his own workers into a trade union, no record that he ever sought to better their conditions at his factory, no record of any intervention on his part with the firm for its treatment of the proletariat. In the evenings he fraternised with his fellow-capitalists, and at weekends he rode to hounds with them, saying he was keeping fit for the military revolutionary responsibilities which he would some day fulfil. His fellow-capitalists never knew of his revolutionary ideas and writings, and Engels even served for four years, beginning in 1864, as President of the city's Schiller-Anstalt, helping in building its library. When Marx brought him into the Gen-

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eral Council of the International, there were those who thought Engels' fortune was securing him his seat. At any rate, most of Marx's working years were lived in financial dependence on his friend, the Manchester textile manufacturer.

WAS MARX INDEED AN activist, a committed fighter? Here too a curious passivity comes to the fore. He demanded authoritarian power, but he disliked the rough and tumble of politics. As Marx's wife wrote: "Karl and some of his closest friends broke off completely from the doings of the bulk of the emigrants and never took part in a single demonstration. He and his friends left the Workers' Educational Society...." He attended only one of the six congresses of the International Workingmen's Association. As his admiring follower Friedrich Lessner described it:

> The Congress at the Hague was the only one that Marx attended personally. He stayed in London, leaving it to others to shine at the Congresses. When he at last resolved to go to this Congress, it was only to put an end to Bakunin's intrigues, once for all.

He was glad to have done with the International, to see it consigned to New York, and to return to his studies at the British Museum. Even prior to the decision to transfer the General Council to New York, Marx had decided, he said at Amsterdam, to retire from it so that he could devote himself more fully to his scholarly researches. During the earlier years from 1850 to 1864, when he cut himself off so completely from political activities, some thought he had given up politics entirely. He and Engels took a perverse delight in being men without a party. Engels pronounced in 1851 that in exile

> everyone must necessarily become a fool, an ass and a scurvy knave unless he withdraws from it completely and contents himself with being an independent writer who doesn't bother his head in the least about the so-called revolutionary party.

To which Marx answered: "I very much like the public isolation in which we find ourselves. It is quite in accordance with our attitude and our principles." To which Engels again responded on the joys of being free from a party:

> We need no popularity and no support from any party in any country....
>
> From now on we are responsible to ourselves alone.... For years we acted as though the ragtag and bobtail were our party, although we had no party....

It was a remarkable confession that the *Communist Manifesto* had been a "private" or "isolated" document, speaking on behalf of a party which they regarded as a sham and for people who they were convinced "did not understand even the elementary principles of our cause."

When Lassalle laboured to have Marx's Prussian citizenship restored so that he could join with him in leading the revival of the German workers' movement, Marx showed scant enthusiasm for the project. He refused Lassalle's invitation in 1862 that they place themselves together at the head of the reviving workers' movement. He felt, apart from other reasons, that he could not interrupt his theoretical studies.

Mother, Son, and Jews

WHAT THEN was the ultimate source of Marx's Promethean complex? That it differed in basic respects from what Freud has described as the Oedipus complex we can have little doubt. This combination of traits, of the exaltation of struggle joined with utter personal helplessness, of the readiness to sacrifice himself for humanity joined with an utter contempt for it (he prefaced *Capital* with Dante's proverb, "Follow your own course, and let people talk"), this revolutionist who was the most authoritarian of men, this rebel against the *status quo* who pictured himself as history's executioner, this political chieftain who hated to go to a political meeting, and was most of his life reluctant to join any political party or group —we have here a set of traits in Marx's psyche whose explanation still eludes us.

To begin with, Marx was a man who, unlike other Jewish sons, hated his mother. In his innermost roots, he had none of the reassurance of maternal love. If he was in Oedipal revolt against his father, it was not for love of his mother. And that curious helplessness which he manifested in the midst of his struggle was probably from that lack of emotional ballast which comes with maternal rejection. At the age of fifty, he still recollected unpleasantly his mother saying in bad German, "If Karl had made capital instead of...."

His mother was remembered as stupid, as without understanding, and suspicious of his activities. He wished she were dead, and when Mary Burns died, wrote to Engels: "Instead of Mary, should it not have been my mother, who is full of bodily infirmities and has lived her life?" His mother in 1862 would not give Marx a penny in his desperate need. And when she died in 1863, Marx's wife wrote that it would

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be hypocrisy to say that she had been "sentimental" at the news.

Marx's dislike of Henrietta Pressburg Marx reached back into his childhood, through his youth, and manhood. She had evidently been the one member of the family who resisted the renunciation of Judaism; not until both her parents were dead would she consent to follow her husband's example of conversion. She complained in 1840 that Marx had become a stranger to his family, and she thought his newspaper was a "fiasco." Marx in turn, complaining in 1842 of "unpleasant family controversies," said that although they were "well off" they were making difficulties which embarrassed him. The following year he wrote bitterly that he had already been engaged for seven years, and that his fiancée had had to fight not only "the hardest battles" with her own "aristocratic relations, whose twin objects of worship are the 'Lord in Heaven' and the 'Lord in Berlin' " but also with his own family. Years later Marx denied that Jenny's relatives were actuated by anti-Semitism, though his early letters suggest it was involved. His mother felt that the relatives of Jenny von Westphalen humiliated her. Perhaps she felt too that Karl, at the age of eighteen wishing to marry a girl four years older than himself, was looking for a surrogate for herself. In Jenny's father, the old Baron, interested in Saint-Simon, Karl Marx had indeed found a new father, one so sympathetic to his Promethean impulses that Marx dedicated to him his doctoral dissertation. When Marx at the age of twenty-five wrote: "The Hebrew faith is repellent to me," he was (one could say) writing down in ideological terms that he found his mother and her ways repulsive.

THE PROMETHEAN COMPLEX, we perceive, is basically different from the kind associated with Napoleonic ambition. A Napoleon could venture forth, fortified by his mother's love, with supreme self-confidence; Marx, choosing Promethean revolt as his life's plan, a perpetual struggle against the gods, was always to re-enact a search for self-confidence, always seeking recognition as a god, always anticipating rejection. His world was always to be one of struggle because he never felt secure in love. He took the eternal Empedoclean duality of love and hatred, and suppressing the love, warped in his relation to his mother, left only the hatred as a motive force in history. It is indeed the rejected son who becomes the Promethean.

Marx's hatred for Judaism—otherwise inexplicable—was the outcome of an animosity toward all that his mother signified for him. His youthful essay on *The Jewish Question* (1843) was the confused argument of a man who hates his Jewish heritage so much that he cannot bring himself to say plainly that he supports political and civil rights for the Jews. He derided Judaism; he hated the fact that the Jews, in contravention of the materialistic conception of history, had chosen to survive. "Judaism," he declared, "has been preserved, not in spite of history, but by history." Yet he knew the history of the Spanish and German Jews and their decisions to resist economic determination, and to sacrifice their goods for their religious loyalties. He ridiculed the Jewish pedlars:

> What is the profane basis of Judaism? Practical need, self-interest. What is the worldly cult of the Jew? Huckstering. What is his worldly God? Money.

Yet his own historical knowledge should have led him to recognise what a figure of heroism the Jewish pedlar was—this defenceless proto-bourgeois, this pioneer of trade, moving about through the uncertain apertures of closed, narrow, insulated feudal worlds, bringing goods, news, intelligence, himself, an itinerant rationalist, observing people's superstitions in different places, this huckster, with his pack on his back, travelling in fear of his life, in dread danger, and surviving the depredations of feudal knights, and feudal mobs—this despised huckster was as noble a figure as any of the posturing actors in the revolutionary pantheon. To Marx the Jew became the symbol for capitalist enterprise, and the Yankee by extension a Jew. The Jews were summarily informed they could be free only when capitalism was abolished. All this despite the fact that he relied on Jewish businessmen in Cologne to help finance his *Rheinische Zeitung*. The Promethean rebellion against his Jewish origins became curiously united with his uprising against capitalism.

How directly Marx's anti-Semitism derived from his hatred for his mother is most remarkably evidenced by the special vindictiveness he bore for the Dutch Jews. Marx's mother was, it will be recalled, a Dutch Jewess who all her life spoke poor German. To the relatives on his mother's side, the wealthy Dutch Jewish family of Philips, Marx repeatedly turned for money. Of the Dutch Jews Marx wrote in ugly terms in one of his *New York Tribune* articles, "The Russian Loan," published on 4 January 1856:

> Take Amsterdam, for instance, a city harbouring many of the worst descendants of the Jews whom Ferdinand and Isabella drove out of Spain and, who, after lingering a while in Portugal, were driven thence also, and eventually found a safe place of retreat in Holland.... These men have their agents at Rotterdam, the Hague, Ley-

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den, Haarlem, Nymwegen, Delft, Groningen, Antwerp, Ghent, Brussels, and various other places in the Netherlands and surrounding German and French territories.... Here and there and everywhere that a little capital courts investment, there is ever one of these little Jews ready to make a little suggestion or place a little bit of a loan. The smartest highwayman in the Abruzzi is not better posted up about the locale of the hard cash in a traveller's valise or pocket than these Jews about any loose capital in the hands of a trader.... These small Jewish agents draw their supplies from the big Jewish houses, such as that of Hollander and Lehren, Lonigswerter, Raphael, Stern, Bischoffsheim of Amsterdam, Ezekiels of Rotterdam. Hollander and Lehren are of the Portuguese sect of Jews, and practise a great ostensible devotion to the religion of their race.

Marx sank to an utter vulgarity as he described the crowds of Jewish agents in an Amsterdam office:

> The language spoken smells strongly of Babel, and the perfume which otherwise pervades the place is by no means of a choice kind.

His hysterical hatred of the Jews led Marx to the verge of a conspiracy theory of history.

> Thus we find every tyrant backed by a Jew, as is every Pope by a Jesuit. In truth, the cravings of oppressors would be hopeless, and the practicability of war out of the question, if there were not an army of Jesuits to smother thought and a handful of Jews to ransack pockets.... The fact that 1,855 years ago Christ drove the Jewish money-changers out of the temple, and that the money-changers of our age enlisted on the side of tyranny happen again to be Jews is perhaps no more than a historic coincidence.

Thus, with heavy-handed irony, Karl Marx insinuated that it was no coincidence that "Jewish money-changers" were the villains of two thousand years of history. He was evidently going to drive them, as a new Messiah, from the modern temples. To such degraded writing and to such a distortion of history was Marx driven when the subject of the Jews was raised, and his feelings of mother rejection awakened.

Here was the darkest source of his complex. Charles A. Dana, the managing editor of the *Tribune*, who secured Marx's articles for publication, was ousted by his chief, Horace Greeley, in 1862. Among other reasons Greeley said he had disliked Dana's publication of anti- Semitic articles. Marx had provided several of them.[3]

[3] Marx wrote three such articles for the *New York Tribune*. Edmund Silberner, "Was Marx an Anti-Semite?", *Historica Judaica*, Vol. XI (April, 1949), pp. 33–35.

The Conversionary Experience

MARX'S FAVOURITE METAPHOR for the process of social evolution, moreover, evidently reflected his mother-complex. No social theorist has ever spoken so much about wombs and birth-pangs. "New, higher relations of production never appear before the material conditions of their existence have matured in the womb of the old society," Marx wrote in the preface of the *Contribution*; "the productive forces developing in the womb of bourgeois society create the material conditions for the solution of that antagonism." Again, in the preface to *Capital*, Marx sees the practical contribution of social science as shortening and lessening "the birth pangs" of the new society. The womb, of course, is a classical theme of imagery; psycho-analytical studies have explored the recurrent theme in myth, literature, and religion of the "return to the womb," the longing for the peaceful equilibrium of the mother's womb. But for Marx the womb became an object of constraint, of suppression; he is longing not to return to the womb but to emerge from it. Asian metaphysicians might long for the pre-natal quiescence, when the individual was merged in the maternal environment, where there were no contradictions, no unsatisfied needs. Theirs, however was a regressive dialectic rather than a "progressive" one. The rejection of the mother, the maternal womb, thus provides the most recurrent thematic imagery for Marx. It is part of the psychology of a man engaged in a mother-directed rebellion, ever uncertain of his manhood, and looking in the movement of history for a new mother to sustain him. The working class became a symbolic mother, and he hoped for himself, as he said of the Communards, that he would be "enshrined forever in the great heart of the working class."

Marx's mother-hatred, linked with his revulsion against both Judaism and Capitalism, was also associated with that passivity, that incapacity for personal struggle, and that personal dependence upon Engels which we have already observed. Inevitably, it suggests an element of that German revolutionary student culture which so impressed Marx and persisted in his later mode of life as an eternal student. Marx's "most intimate friend" at the University of Berlin was Adolph Rutenberg, who, as a student activist, a few years earlier, served several terms in Prussian prisons. It was Rutenberg who evidently introduced Marx to the exciting circle of student and university intellectuals, the *Doktorklub* of Young Hegelians, and it was Rutenberg who, as editor in 1842 of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, brought Marx to the newspaper's staff. Marx, one might say, remained all

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his life fixated in the students' culture. A Prussian agent in 1853, when Marx was thirty-four years of age, portrayed him:

> Marx was leading a regular Bohemian existence. Washing and combing himself and changing his linen are rarities with him.... He often idles away for days on end, but when he has a great deal to do he works day and night with tireless endurance. He has no fixed times for going to bed or getting up. He often stays up for whole nights, then lies down fully clothed on the couch at midday and sleeps till evening, untroubled by people coming in or going out, for everyone has a free entrée to his house.

When Marx got depressed, as he often did, he would take several days off to study, for instance, mathematics. He refused to leave the students' culture for the outside world.

A personality of this kind is apt to have masochist traits, a tendency to extreme self-sacrifice by way of justifying its passivity, a self punishment for the guilt of its own exploitation of others. Marx was aware of irrational forces within himself. His very first article on communism as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in 1842 spoke of the "demons we can overcome only by submitting to them," and Engels, characterising him in humorous verse at the same time, wrote:

> *With clenched and threatening fist he rages without rest,*
> *As though ten thousand devils were dancing on his chest.*

A masochistic component was evident among most of the young German Jews who became communists. Moses Hess, for instance, the "Communist Rabbi" who converted Engels to communism, married a prostitute in order to redeem her. Heinrich Heine proclaimed himself a communist even though he prophesied that after a revolution the working men's wives would wrap their fish in the pages of his poems.

FIXATED IN SUCH A COMPLEX of hatred and longing, with a sensed inadequacy of his own masculinity, an intellectual such as Karl Marx, is especially prone to a conversionary experience. He yields himself to an identification with a lowly class endowed, he believes, with a physical power as well as a spontaneous spirit of affection and comradeship. Such a conversionary experience Marx had in Paris in 1844 when he was working intensely on a history of the French Revolutionary Convention. "He was irritable and violent, particularly when he had worked himself sick and had not been to bed for three or four nights in succession," wrote his friend Arnold Ruge to Feuerbach. He was frequenting workers' meetings, deriving from them an unprecedented exhilaration, and writing that "at the communist workers' meetings brotherhood is no phrase but a reality, and a true spirit of nobility is reflected in the faces of these men hardened by labour." Marx found himself enthralled by the workers' virtues, "their studiousness, their thirst for knowledge, their moral energy, their restless urge for development."

In such a mood the Promethean spirit discovered its historic embodiment in the awakening massive physical and moral power of the proletariat. The object of Marx's science was henceforth to document and demonstrate the Promethean vision. The imperative was to transcribe the myth into reality, and for many years of his life the myth was transcendent even though with time it too was transformed, demythologised.

Friedrich Engels meanwhile underwent a similar conversionary experience. He met in London three workingmen—a shoemaker, Bauer; a compositor, Schapper; and a watchmaker, Moll. "They were the first proletarian revolutionists I had ever met," recalled Engels, "I can never forget the profound impression these three men made upon me, a youngster at the time, just entering upon manhood." They were "three real men," said Engels, and he himself "had now the will to become a man." He recalled Moll and Schapper: "how often have I seen him and Schapper triumphantly defend the entrance to a hall against hundreds of assailants!" To become a man! The Promethean search for manhood, of revolt against tyrannical Zeus and Hera, prepared one's emotions for an ideological conversion. Thus Moses Hess, the "Communist Rabbi," with his "missionary zeal... won over a young man of twenty-two (Engels) in a single afternoon." That was how Marx described Engels' conversion; it had little to do with scientific evidence and the logic of hypotheses. Has there ever been a "scientific socialist"?

The Lonely Splendour of Defiance

MARX EVIDENTLY felt insecure to the end about the scientific validity of his ideas. His intellectual insecurity was such as to lead him to isolate himself from his intellectual contemporaries. All his life he was reluctant to meet men who were his intellectual equals. He could feel comfortable only as the unchallenged head of a hierarchy of admirers, but he drew back from the give-and-take of intellectual debate with trained scientists and thinkers. As Kovalevsky tells: "Many European writers of note, including Laveleye, vainly expressed the desire

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to be introduced to him. He kept aloof from them. . . ." Only among subordinates, among the awed artisans of the Communist League, for instance, who as Lafargue wrote, were calling him "Father Marx" even before he was thirty years old, could his Promethean unrest be stilled. This quest for a society of subordinates to his intellectual hegemony threw a bizarre light on the unconscious goal of the Promethean rebellion.

Carl Schurz, later one of Abraham Lincoln's anti-slavery generals and Secretary of the Interior in Grant's Cabinet, saw clearly the authoritarian striving in Marx which moved his Promethean complex. He described the Marx of 1849, the editor of the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*:

> Never have I seen anyone whose manner was more insufferably arrogant. He would not give a moment's consideration to any opinion that differed from his own. He treated with open contempt every one who contradicted him. Arguments that were not to his taste were answered either by mordant sarcasms upon the speaker's lamentable ignorance, or else by casting suspicion upon the motives of his adversary. I shall never forget the scornful tone in which he uttered the word "bourgeois," as if he were spewing it out of his mouth; and he stigmatised as "bourgeois" by which he meant to imply the embodiment of profound moral degradation, every one who ventured to contradict him. It is not surprising that Marx's proposals were rejected . . . and that, far from winning new adherents, he repelled many who might have been inclined to support him.

The sad thing was that Marx cut himself off from the European intellectual community because he could not hope to exercise the hegemony over them that he could over uneducated workingmen. Proudhon in 1846 had pleaded with him in vain:

> Let us have decent and sincere polemics; let us give the world an example of learned and far-sighted tolerance. But simply because we are at the head of a movement, do not let us ourselves become the leaders of a new intolerance, let us not pose as the apostles of a new religion, even though this religion be the religion of logic. . . .

Marx broke with Proudhon.

He resented too the American society because its middle-class culture was exempt from the Promethean irrationality. America seemed to de-mythologise his fellow revolutionists; Willich, Weydemeyer, Heinzen, Weitling, Schurz, Jacobi—all found a new creativity in American life, and shed their political myths as they responded to open possibilities and social realities. America seemed to provide a therapy for the Promethean complex. "The most advanced sons of labour fled in despair to the Transatlantic Republic," wrote Marx in 1864; and as Engels observed in 1851, "the available Germans who are worth anything become easily Americanised and give up any thought of returning. . . . Those Germans who think of returning home are for the most part only demoralised individuals. . . ."

Marx himself stood in a curious relationship of gratitude and resentment to the Americans. *The New York Tribune* gave him the only long-term employment he ever had. Periodically Marx complained as in 1857 that "it is really disgusting to be condemned to take it as a favour that such a rag admits you to its company." He had given "these rascals," he said, "too much for their money." And Engels loyally derided the socialism of its managing editor, Charles A. Dana, as nothing but the "lousiest" petty-bourgeois cheating. The truth of the matter was that Marx was getting paid almost as much as the managing editor himself, and as Engels wrote in 1853: "That Father Dana pays now 2 pounds and honours checks promptly is marvellous. . . . That Dana pays you without grumbling 2 pounds per article is the best proof of how firmly you sit in the *Tribune*." Such Socialist disciples as Franz Mehring perpetuated the tale that Dana was a "hard-boiled Yankee business man" who "showed Marx every form of ruthlessness. . . ." Actually Dana, who had to go on strike to get his own salary raised to fourteen dollars a week, secured Marx a relatively preferential treatment. Marx lost his employment with the *Tribune* only after Dana himself was dismissed over differences stemming mostly from his more vigorous pro-Civil War stand. Marx then appreciated Dana's support, and acknowledged that he missed the *Tribune* "sadly."

In 1866, Marx wrote Kugelmann that he was trying without success "to re-establish my old lucrative connections with America." But the Promethean complex always required jibes at the newspaper and its managing editor because of the very fact that they did provide him with employment and a valued political forum. The Yankee newspaper became part of the feeding system, the mother, whom he repudiated. Nonetheless, when Marx was being denounced as an agent of the Prussian Government and was having to take time to write a book in his personal defence, it was Dana who wrote the most impressive testimonial on his behalf. Marx's spirit, however, required struggle *à outrance*, and the Bourgeois Order had to be misperceived, if necessary, to justify struggle against each one of its parts. If the *New York Tribune* was growing in readership, that was *ipso facto* proof that it shared in bourgeois corruption. The Promethean complex had a compulsion for a lonely splendour of defiance.

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The Gods Return

AS THE YEARS wore on, in the nightmare of personal incapacity, Marx at times recognised the hollow posture in his Promethean urge. To his daughter Laura a year before his death, Marx wrote that he was coming to Paris to find peace there:

> By peace I mean family life, children's voices, the whole of that "microscopic little world" which is so much more interesting than the "macroscopic" world!

The Promethean drive became attenuated not so much because of the hatred of the gods but because of something far more corrosive—the hatred and meanness of comrades in their relation to each other, the insoluble tragedies of domestic existence.

A Strindbergesque shadow was cast on the Marx household. Their economic crises, physical illnesses, were only part of the story. As Marx's wife wrote: "These were accompanied by rankling moral tortures of all kinds." Marx's wife was beset by hysteria and nervous breakdowns. What were the "rankling moral tortures" which weighed on them? Probably the adultery of Marx with his wife's maid, Helene Demuth, who served the family all her life, and the birth to them of an illegitimate son, Frederick Demuth, was a principal one. Marx as a young man had defended such marital infidelity, and indeed had broken with Arnold Ruge when the latter criticised a liaison of Georg Herwegh. Marx's house servant, as Liebknecht describes her, "was pretty," with "a good figure," and "pleasant and attractive features." She evidently rejected her own suitors to remain with the Marx family, and was its dominant feminine personality. Engels wrote when she died:

> It was really due to her that Marx had peace to work for many years, and I myself for the last seven. I don't know what will become of me now. And I shall sadly miss her wonderfully tactful advice on party affairs.

Frederick Demuth was hers and Marx's son. Engels interceded for Marx, as he said, to protect him from a "severe domestic conflict," and evidently supervised the child's upbringing in a working-class home. According to Louise Kautsky, he looked "very much like Marx," and had a "Jewish face." Other socialist comrades of Marx knew of his existence, and the story later circulated in socialist circles that Marx and Engels jestingly referred to him as their "Communist Manifesto," as another example of their collaboration.

But when Eleanor Marx learned the facts from the dying Engels, who "wrote it down on a slateboard for Tussy herself," she cried bitterly. Engels, chagrined that Eleanor refused to credit the story and accused him of lying, had previously said that "Tussy wants to make an idol of her father." At any rate, Marx, recurrently embroiled with his wife's hysteria, said in February 1862, "a lousy life like this is not worth living." In 1858 he had wished himself a hundred fathoms deep under the earth, and then a few weeks later wrote that people with universal aspirations were stupid if they married, and took on petty domestic miseries. In 1868, he complained he was "plagued like Job, though not so God-fearing."

The Promethean complex provided a heroic stance for a young graduate student. But living by a myth finally entrapped one in a morass of unreality. One's revolt against the gods was a public posture belied by the helplessness of a hundred petty and sordid incidents. Marx struggled to convince himself that he was living by a higher personal ethic. He had sacrificed "health, happiness, and family," he wrote a friend in 1867, to finish his book: "I laugh at the so-called 'practical' men and their wisdom. If one wants to be an ox, one can easily turn one's back on human suffering and look after one's skin." But he had offered his children in sacrifice much more than himself. Prometheus never felt guilty for suffering he imposed on others. If one seeks for the psychological basis of Marx's rejection of politics at critical junctures, his destruction both of the Communist League and the International Workingmen's Association, it might lie in his periodic consciousness that the Promethean myth was hollow. August Willich and Michael Bakunin, with their respective compulsions for armed revolt, externalised the Promethean ingredient more starkly than he could, and made its incommensurability with reality too manifest for Marx himself.

THE CONFLICT WITH THE anarchist Bakunin naturally produced a still further amendment of historical materialism. As a young communist, Marx had ridiculed any concern for ethics, for moral principle. Morality, he had said in the *Communist Manifesto*, was to the proletarian "so many bourgeois prejudices." Confronted, however, with activists who practised what he had preached, Marx, through Engels in 1872, took Bakunin to task: "It is one of his fundamental principles that keeping promises and the like are merely bourgeois prejudices, which a true revolutionary must treat with disdain. . . ." Marx, recalled Franziska Kugelmann, used to criticise Bakunin unsparingly.

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> He said his motto was "everything must be ruined" and that it was absolute nonsense to destroy values, to pull down one's own and other people's houses and then run away without knowing where and how to build another one.

Marx and Engels furthermore repudiated the Promethean student activists in Russia. All the latter were succeeding in doing, they said, was getting themselves sent into a useless Siberian exile. "The more serious" students, in their view, were wisely keeping out of secret political societies, and organising instead practical mutual aid societies. Marx and Engels excoriated Nechayev ("the ideal type of the student") for his fraud, deceit, fanaticism, and amoralism. Twenty-five years earlier Marx had mocked at Moses Hess' ethical scruples. Now, as an old man, analysing the Promethean complex among student activists, he found it was compounded of masochistic and sadistic ingredients.

As the Promethean motif became attenuated in Marx's last years, even his antipathy to Judaism noticeably softened. In 1877, Marx, vacationing with Eleanor at Carlsbad, met the greatest Jewish historian of his time, Heinrich Graetz, a man of the orthodox wing of Judaism. Marx liked him, sent him *Capital* and *The Civil War in France* and chose him for the confidence that Eleanor was betrothed to the Frenchman Lissagaray. Graetz, on his part, told Marx his criticisms of the German Social Democratic Party, and sent him his book on *Koheleth* (Ecclesiastes) which he thought Marx as a secularist would like. "The Preacher Solomon," wrote Graetz to Marx, was a realist who in the midst of a hypocritical world, had the courage to preach the rehabilitation of the flesh (a Saint-Simonian phrase). One could hardly have imagined the vindictive author of *The Jewish Question* finding the leading orthodox Jewish scholar of the era so personally and intellectually congenial. Evidently some deep-seated reappraisals were going on in Marx. But Graetz was wrong when he said Marx was a secularist. When Marx's wife and an elder daughter attended the services of Charles Bradlaugh of the National Secular Society, Marx was displeased. "He had a dislike of secularism," said Eleanor Marx. The father told them that if they were wanting to satisfy their metaphysical needs, they should read the Jewish prophets.[4] The old Marx had come to recognise metaphysical needs in the human being. The Promethean antitheology—"All gods I hate"—was an emotional obsolescence, a relic of restless generational striving rather than wisdom.

[4] Max Beer, *Fifty Years of International Socialism* (London, 1935), p. 74.

The Myth De-mythologised

THE PROMETHEAN MYTH in Marx was so de-mythologised at the end that it veered to its opposite—a myth of the decline and deterioration of humanity. A new friendship which Marx formed was a symbol of this last intellectual phase. Marx's new friend was the noted biologist, Edwin Ray Lankester, the first English scientist with whom he was on warm personal terms. To a Russian correspondent in 1881, Marx queried "whether Professor Lankester's 'Chapter on Deterioration' is translated into Russian? He is a friend of mine." Lankester advised Marx on his choice of physicians during his last illness, and stood among the small party at Marx's interment. His essay, "Degeneration," questioned the "tacit assumption of universal progress—an unreasoning optimism." Lankester reminded both the rebels and smug Victorian England "that we are subject to the general law of evolution, and are as likely to degenerate as to progress." He challenged the Victorian ideology which was shared by its thinkers from Herbert Spencer to Karl Marx alike.

> Does the reason of the average man of civilised Europe stand out clearly as an evidence of progress when compared with that of men of bygone ages? Are all the inventions and figments of human superstition and folly, the self-inflicting torturing of mind, the reiterated substitution of wrong for right, and of falsehood for truth, which disfigure our modern civilisation—are these evidences of progress? In such respects we have at least reason to fear that we may be degenerate.

To all this Lankester appended an anxiety that "with regard to ourselves, the white races of Europe, the possibility of degeneration seems to be worth some consideration."

When Prometheus grew old, he wondered how much his rebellion had really brought liberation to humanity, and how much his foreknowledge had been a bogus claim. Marx in his last years was afflicted by a "chronic mental depression," which his rising fame in Europe did little to alleviate. Engels to the end adhered to the Promethean myth, writing in October 1893, not long before his death, that "there is no great historical evil without a compensating historical progress. . . . Let fate be accomplished." But Marx, observing his disciples and their quarrels, said: "All I know is that I am not a Marxist." The doubts, defeats, and reservations to the materialistic conception of history never left him. There were those who said his creative powers failed him in his last decade, when he failed to produce a single piece of sustained writing. But they overlook what was much more

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the case, that the life lived by a myth has its inward meaning shattered when a myth is demythologised. This was Marx's intellectual tragedy. He still had his role to play as "Father Marx" to visiting European socialist activists, but otherwise he withdrew into his privacy, writing to his friend Kugelmann in 1874: "The more one lives, as I do, almost cut off from the outside world, the more one is caught in the emotional life of one's own circle." Not all his journeys for cures to Carlsbad and its waters could save the dissolving myth.

Marx came to recognise that mythology was even more potent in modern times than in ancient.

> Up till now it has been thought [he wrote in 1871] that the growth of the Christian myths during the Roman Empire was possibly only because printing was not yet invented. Precisely the contrary. The daily press and the telegraph, which in a moment spreads inventions over the whole earth, fabricate more myths (and the bourgeois cattle believe and enlarge upon them) in one day than could have formerly been done in a century.

Prometheus Bound

FRONTISPIECE TO THE OFFICIAL GERMAN EDITION OF THE COLLECTED WORKS OF KARL MARX

(*The contemporary allegorical reference is to the prohibition in 1843 of the* Rheinische Zeitung *of which Marx was editor*)

It was his strange fate to have written the greatest modern myth in the language of social science.

IN A SENSE, Marx is the exemplar of the modern intellectual, with his noblest traits and weaknesses accentuated as in an idealised type. Marx's Promethean complex is the complex of the modern intellectual. True only a few intellectuals have hated their mothers as much as he did his, yet it is striking how the greatest of intellectuals, from Shaw to Einstein, have had similar traits of personal incapacity to cope with a competitive world, how often they too have found themselves possessed by the feeling of estrangement from this world, "alienated," as the fashionable phrase has it. If the *Eternal Feminine* has been strong in the character of intellectuals, they too, especially when they have found humankind wanting, have been prepared to re-shape people by force to the pattern of virtue. From the Shaw of *On the Rocks* to Mao, Castro, Nkrumah, and Régis Debray, there is the continuity of a sociological world causal-line. For such reasons the culture of the intellectuals was given its impress by Karl Marx. The intellectual, with his longing for a political myth in which he could take his hero's part, found in Marx a supreme dramatic model. Weak himself, often lacking in physical power and confidence, he was strengthened by the knowledge that a powerful physical army of proletarians would march under his leadership. The new intellectuals, often displaced and misfitted in the capitalist order, compelled to work for employers they despised or to submit politically to cultural illiterates, saw themselves instated at last in the council of leadership. They would shed their femininity when they achieved, as Marx always longed to, an authoritarian power.

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Thus it was that Marxism became the ideology of the emerging intellectual élite. It was indeed their "false consciousness" because they could never avow to themselves that their latent aim was to rule as philosopher-kings. They could speak with more passion and presumably sincerity when they felt they were urging the proletariat to emancipate itself. Yet the fact of the matter is that the working classes were almost always suspicious of Marxist socialism precisely because they sensed that it harboured the potential of a new dictatorship, that of the intellectuals.

A structural similarity of emotion, a psychological isomorphism, thus joins Marx with our generation of intellectuals. The New Leftist, like the Old Marxist, becomes periodically impatient with the slowness of social evolution. He then looks to wars and civil wars to hasten the process, and give him his historical opportunity. A new version of Promethean mythology sees salvation emanating from a war of the countryside: Asia, Africa, and Latin America, against the cities, North America, and Europe.

There seems to be no law of cumulative historical experience. Each modern generation seems to long to give itself self-destructively to its myths. It follows the path from Promethean grandiosity to the nothingness of Balzac's old painter. Somehow, however, one hopes that wisdom can disperse the powers of mythology; when it does, the intellectuals themselves will be liberated.

Barking at the Moon

On the rotting wharf that pilfering cur,
Pale yapping waif of a wharfinger,
Barks at the moon:
The lonely at the lonelier.

O listen hard. By the wharf's stone wall
Where in the dark the water curls
To lap at land's ramshackledom,
There gloomy voices rise and fall,
Gloomy voices of yellow girls
Singing, singing of kingdoms come.

Why must I hear such singing; why
Must I walk so ware of the world gone wry;
And why, pale dog,
Unhappy dog, am I always I?

Hagiwara Sakutarō
Translated by Graeme Wilson

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Arthur Koestler

Episode

THE BONES of the earth are sticking out of this barren hill. The ancient rocks have faces that sneer at me. The roots of the dead olive trees are like snakes in the white dust waiting to bite into my sandals, to trip me up under my load. Fast vultures sail over our procession, not doves. My blood has dried on the thorns and the black flies have clustered into a new crown round my head. Three starved dogs are following us at a distance. Verily a procession fit for a king.

Father, if you see me, how can you bear it? Almighty you, who made the sun stand still, can you not shift that timber on my shoulder by an inch to get its splintered edge away from my collar-bone to the muscle? It would hurt less on the muscle; I am a healer, I know. But I cannot lay hands on my own body, not even to shift that piece of timber, because it might slip. If I fall, they will flog me again, and I might cry out. Or I might pass water. They say when one is hoisted up one passes water and they laugh. Even my bowels might open. A father cannot let it happen to his son.

You teased Abraham when you bid him to cut his firstborn's throat, but you only stopped him in the last minute. Your sense of humour makes my sweat run cold. This ugly play is being performed before empty seats, for your benefit alone. The only purpose is to make you listen, to wake you up.

When did you fall asleep, or start to look away? When David went after Absalom? Or earlier on, when Cain slew Abel? You have made a rotten hash of Adam's seed, almighty you. Often when the night lay heavily on me while the others slept like children, I wondered whether you yourself were the deaf and dumb spirit who possessed that boy they brought to me when we came down from the mountain. Was it you, disguised as a demon, who seized that boy, and tore him, and shook him with convulsions, so that he had to throw himself into the fire and into water, to make an end of himself? Are you the one who is playing these games with Adam's seed? Or are you only absentminded and asleep? Soon I shall know when this stake and I change places, and instead of me carrying it, it will carry me. That will be the test, your trial. Then I shall know.

I have been flogging myself, harder than the soldiers flogged me, into believing that you were only absentminded, preoccupied with matters more important than your creation—though what they could be beats me, harder than the soldiers beat me. Perhaps you were also absentminded when you went into my mother, that tearful woman who keeps getting in my way. If that is the case, and you are only distracted or asleep, I shall pull your sleeve in my pain until you wake up and my purpose is achieved. But if you are that deaf and dumb spirit, then pulling your sleeve will be the gesture of a fool, and dying will be hard. They say it takes three days to die in this way, unless they break your bones to speed it up. It will be hard, and my bowels will open from my lofty height upon this orphaned world, and it will all have been a mockery—you, a mirage formed by desert vapours, and my tearful mother an adulteress.

Speak, damn you, speak to me as you did on that night on the mountain, and don't

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pretend you have more important business to attend to. Have I not told those innocents that you have numbered every hair on their heads, and that not even a sparrow can fall to the ground without your will? Does not Adam's seed count for more than a host of sparrows? Do you feel that burning splinter in my shoulder-bone? Shift it an inch, you who can shift mountains with your breath.

THE PATH IS GETTING steeper, we are approaching the top. Soon I shall know the answer. The soldiers curse me without conviction, they keep stumbling and kicking at stones, afraid of you, a vicious desert god. The three dogs are still behind us; when I was born, I was visited by three Kings. There is still time, you know, to change my mind; the Governor said so, he will arrange a pardon if I recant. I could recant even when already up. But by then my arms will be broken and roped to the crossbar. The soldiers say that in earlier times it was done with nails, but it was not safe because the man might come loose and fall down. The pain I can perhaps bear, though they all howl like wolves when they are hoisted up, but the healing power will have gone from my broken hands. They were good hands. They healed the sick, raised the dead, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils. And verily, I did these things, no one can deny it. Father, I have worked miracles for you, now it is your turn.

The path is getting less steep, I can glimpse the top. But the stones roll under my feet to taunt me, the roots keep tripping me up, they have to push and whip me on like a reluctant mule. My royal crown of flies bothers me more than the pain in the bone. The sun is a sword of flame but my eyes are clouded by mist. On the swaying hill-top the women are waiting, three weeping willows. I shall not speak to them, but they will watch what is done to me and witness my defilement. I was never drawn to their hungry flesh. They want the bridegroom to be cradled in his mother's womb, or in another womb, but it is the same. When the dead rise again there will be no marrying. The pain is so strong that I feel it no longer, but if I fall they will beat me until I hate them and you will have another excuse for looking away.

IF A FATHER turns his back, how shall the son know whether he exists? I know that you exist, but I know your shape no more than that of the filthy spirit which threw the boy into convulsions. In a place high in the mountains there was a village idiot whom the heathens worshipped, a bald, hunchbacked dwarf cavorting in the dust and feeding on dogs' excrement which the aldermen served him on golden plates. Now I seem to be falling, falling, but ever so slowly, going down. The stake is gone, it did not break my spine, now they can beat me to their hearts' content, my brow enjoys its dustbath in the sand, all is blessed peace. They are standing around me, discussing what is to be done, and I am lying prone in white dust and bliss. There is a stranger with them now, a farm boy with round eyes, they are putting that yoke of timber on his naked back. See now I am up again, and had to make no effort, they did it for me, ever so gently. And I am walking again, supported on both sides, walking on air as I walked that day on the lake. Then I was holding up that foolish fisherman of little faith, but now I am being held up by the gentle soldiers who are as brothers to me. So did Abraham carry his son to the place of sacrifice, and both were frightened until you called off the joke. I could not be sure that this too was meant as a joke and I was a little frightened, but now I know. The joke was played by both of us, so half the fault was mine, and I must explain to you just once more why I did it. I have tried to explain to you before, but you would not listen. I wanted to die in order to wake you up. That was the only reason. For I thought that you were asleep, or absent-minded or otherwise engaged, and therefore unaware of the abomination and desolation of the world you made. How else could I explain to myself that you have allowed these goings on, that you allowed in

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your lovingness, allowed in your omniscience, that you let pass in your omnipotence, that men should become worse than beasts, worse than all that crawls and creeps, that the breath you blew into Adam's nostrils should become a stink of dragons, and his seed a pollution of the earth? So I had to decide on this course to wake you up. My prayers had been of no avail. I could cure the sick and cast out a few devils, but that universal sickness of mind that has befallen your creation, that was your responsibility. And you did nothing about it. You were asleep. Once I even heard you snore through the sobs of a youth whom the soldiers put to torture.

So I had to decide on this course, to die in this ugly and painful way, to bring you back to your senses. Is there a father who could not be made to repent by the suicide of his son? Could he watch with eyes of stone while they break his arms and hoist him up to let him rot like a vegetable tied to a stick? I knew that you could not let it pass. You would have to intervene, and then you would clean up this whole mess in your holy wrath, as I cleaned the moneylenders out of the temple. And then there would be no more butchers and no more lambs.

THAT IS HOW I planned it; but I could not tell it to those blockheads of little faith. They would not have understood. Because these men chose their path for the love of me, father, not for the love of you. They saw me cure the sick and feed the starving, and this they approved of and understood. But they never understood your devious ways. They were not allowed to make themselves any likeness or graven image of you, and that was a great mistake. They were told that no man can see your face and live, and that was another great mistake. For men cannot love nor understand that which has no shape nor substance, and which has no likeness in their own world. So I had to tell them parables by which to provide the likenesses and the images that were missing. I told them that the wine was my blood and the bread my substance, and they swallowed both, and felt that their god was inside them. I could not tell them that I had to decide on this course to make you sit up and remind you of your responsibilities, because that would have made them love you even less. Instead I told them the parable of Jonas, who was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, and told them I would lie three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. I repeated the parable of Jonas several times to rub it into their thick heads, and in the end they swallowed that too and would have me rise again as Jonas rose from the deep and Joseph rose from the well. They have eyes but you hide from them, they have ears but you do not speak to them. So they must live by parables.

ONLY ONE MAN understood my plan, the Governor. He wondered why I stayed silent instead of refuting the false accusations, but then he understood. He looked through my eyes which to him were like open windows, then turned his back and rinsed his hands, which also was a parable to indicate that this business could only be settled between you and me. So be it.

Here then is the place; we have arrived. I don't like these preparations. The soldiers who supported me no longer look kind. They sweat and breathe hard. They are measuring my length. From crown to sandals. They seem to mean business. Now is the time, now is the time, father, to call it off, to stop this frightening make-believe. Abraham is drawing his knife on his son. These men are pressing me down against the stake. It cannot be, they cannot do this to me, it cannot be borne. A voice is howling like a wolf's, it cannot be mine. And the women look on. The sponge in my mouth is bitter and soothing, dimming the world, a mouthful of sleep. It cannot be true that this is happening to me. These broken hands are not mine. This filth comes not out of me. This rising higher and higher up in white flames of pain happens not to me. I am rising and sinking, turning on a wheel, riding in the belly of the whale. The sun has turned

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black and darkness fills the air, I must not faint. I must look into his eyes if he has eyes to see. Eloi, eloi, how can you bear watching this? Thou dumb spirit, vapour of the desert, ignoble absence, thou art not, hast never been. Only a parable. And my own death another parable; they will remember it and twist its meaning. They will torture and kill in the name of a parable. And thus will your will be done, not mine.

Kinglake's *Eothen*

Off Suez, Kinglake writes, a British gun-brig
Requested water, was refused; the hearty captain
Answered: "Choose! My water, or your town!"
Promptly, they filled his casks; the Pasha was
Delighted to obey: not every day did power speak
So unambiguously. So, too, in Damascus, where
Our Consul-General, Mr. Farran, had run up
His flag: "Let no Mussulman," he said, "deny
The European's right of way." When one fool tried to,
Demetri, Kinglake's servant, horsewhipped him
Right in the public street; in consequence, won
Perfect admiration. So was it everywhere: no
Mule or ass for hire? Kinglake just took one, asking:
"How can a European travel otherwise?" These "Asiatics,"
He reminds us, need our reassurance more than
They need our money. Corrupt, misruled, and
Abject, they look to us to tip them off, to
Indicate the winning side: the captain's guns,
Demetri's horsewhip, bring happiness to men
Whose only aim in life is to anticipate who'll
Hold tomorrow's reins, to get a clear idea
Who's on the up-and-up; who's to pull in behind.

That was in 1832. Things are quite different now.
To flog an "Asiatic" in his street has ceased
To be our habit or our ethic, would make us
Fear for our lives or blush for shame. And what of
Them, the "Asiatics"? Have they changed too, and do
They blush for shame that once they kissed the whip that
Showed the ascendant power? I hope so most
Sincerely, but I sometimes think I have my doubts.

Nigel Dennis

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Christopher Sykes

Heroes & Suspects

The German Resistance in Perspective

FOR THE LAST FEW YEARS I have been engaged on a biography of Adam von Trott zu Solz, one of the conspirators against Hitler in July, 1944. He had been involved in opposition since 1933. He was arrested and in common with all those whose connection with the plot was discovered or even suspected, with the exception of those whose trials were not completed by the end of the war, he was condemned to death. He suffered barbarous execution. He was thirty-five years old.

He is of special interest to the English-speaking world because, from the days when he was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford from 1931 to 1933, he maintained a wide British acquaintance of much distinction, and, after his first visit to the United States in 1937, he extended this to include a great number of Americans. His mother was half-American, being a descendant of John Jay, the friend of Washington and the first Chief Justice of the United States. Trott was a man of rare complexity; he was an ardent patriot who, as an anti-Nazi from the beginning of Hitler's regime, found his patriotic duty in extreme conspiracy against the head of the German state; but he did not follow this line of conduct easily, nor without painful self-question and great reluctance. If the metaphor is not driven too far he might be aptly described as the Hamlet of the German resistance. Many of the conspirators had a touch of Hamlet from the circumstances of their lives, but I find it stronger in Trott than in the others.

Study of the German resistance has left me puzzled in one respect: why has this movement, which required the very greatest physical and moral courage on the part of its members, received such a bad press? Perhaps "bad press" is too strong a term; perhaps one should rather describe it as an indifferent, an at best coldly polite press, or one of faint praise. It was not till late in the day, in 1964, on the twentieth anniversary of Stauffenberg's attempt that the resistance received wide acclaim in the German press. There have been many accounts of it in English, both in books and in newspapers. Most of the press articles which have appeared have viewed the resistance with some scepticism. The books are usually laudatory, sometimes to the point of hagiography, but Sir John Wheeler-Bennett's classic work, *The Nemesis of Power*, contains much criticism, some of considerable severity. The leaders of forlorn hopes are traditionally looked upon as people to be venerated. Why should something of an exception be made of these?

I am not sure of the answer, but I submit some guesses.

OF ALL THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENTS of World War II the German was the only one to fail, completely and calamitously. One may be tempted to say the same of the Polish and Czech resistances, but these succeeded in calling forth sympathy and thus influencing events abroad. The Poles kept partisans in the field right to the end and achieved the Warsaw rising which, if it had not been betrayed by Stalin, might have been of great strategic value to the Allies. To some extent, a very small one admittedly, both these movements influenced the course of the war and the process of Nazi defeat. The *Deutsche Widerstand* can make no such claim. Its numerous conspiracies, culminating in Stauffenberg's attempt to kill Hitler on 20 July 1944, made no discernible difference either to the military operations on either side, or to the political attitudes of the Allies towards

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Germany during the last phase. It can even be argued that the activities of the German resistance worsened the plight of their country, since the savagery of Hitler's revenge on the conspirators and their families increased (illogically enough) hatred of Germany as a whole. In the short term the failure of these brave men was absolute.

This only states again the odd fact that the usual respect given to the forlorn hope is refused in this case. Here, I think, one should notice another radical difference, suggested above, between the German and all the other resistances. The latter were all national in character; this one was not. To say so is not to represent it as anti-national—far from it. The movement contained some anti-nationalists, but the majority of its members were nearer to nationalism than its opposite; they were concerned with the future of Germany, and Germany moreover as a great country. But this did not make them representative in the way that the French, Dutch, Belgian, Greek, Yugoslav and the latter-day Italian resistances could claim to be. These might be very imperfectly representative and without doubt they exaggerated their claims, but the claims were real nonetheless. They depended upon national-cum-revolutionary traditions, and such a combined tradition Germany lacks in the political field.

FOR A REVOLUTION to succeed in time of war and full mobilisation, it is essential that its leaders should enjoy wide sympathy in the army. A successful war-time revolution in the face of a totally hostile army is something that has never happened and hardly could. To be representative, the German resistance leaders had to have an army mutiny on a huge scale in their favour. How was this to be achieved in a country in which the tradition of the popular rising against the ruling establishment had been virtually lost for some four centuries, and in which traditions of unconditional loyalty and obedience to military superiors, and above all to the legally elected and supreme head of the state had been steadily growing? This was the problem of the active and extreme anti-Nazis. It was not one easily understood by people abroad who belonged to traditions that took pride in their "glorious revolutions". There is a well authenticated story of a conversation between Adam von Trott and a French friend. This occurred sometime in 1938 when Trott was studying at the University of Peking. The Frenchman asked him why on earth the German people did not simply revolt against Hitler. When Trott explained to him at length that there was no possibility, for historical reasons, of a revolution in Germany his friend broke in with a cry of "*Alors faites en une!*"

The German resistance tried hard *faire en une*. They did not do so by ignoring German tradition but by following it. They attempted "revolution from above." Several of them, Trott in particular, had in youth read Moeller van den Bruck's work *Das Dritte Reich*, and their ideal was his hero "the conservative revolutionary." Bruck was a meretricious writer and in more mature years (had they been given them) these followers would have laid him aside, but for all that, Bruck's notion of the conservative revolutionary was not unintelligent nor ill-adapted to German historical circumstances. It was to such an ideal that Hitler pretended to conform, thereby gaining vast support.

It should be added, perhaps, that Bruck should on no account be associated with the Nazis. He was not of their time, His book came out in 1923, and he himself died (by suicide) in 1925. The Nazis did not make a hero of him when they came to power. Their connection with Bruck was simply that, having no guiding idea of any merit, they picked up intellectual odds and ends from people such as he who had, as part of their ingenious disguise. They stole Bruck's title and declared themselves The Third Reich without acknowledgement. The German resisters were not borrowing anything from the Nazis.

To return to this question of the national character of the *Widerstand*. It may seem odd to many people to assert that the resistance never got the army on its side, but such was the fact. It is quite true that a large proportion of the conspirators, Stauffenberg himself, General Ludwig Beck, Peter Yorck von Wartenburg, Hans Oster, Henning von Tresckow, Friedrich Olbricht, Fabian von Schlabrendorff (a survivor), and Field Marshal von Witzleben were soldiers, some of them of very high rank. At the end of the war and in the years immediately after, the July attempt was often referred to as "the Generals' Plot," but research soon showed that this was a misnomer. It was not a military conspiracy. Of the soldiers closely concerned only Beck and Witzleben were officers of Army commander rank, and both of them had been removed from active employment, Beck by his voluntary resignation in

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1938, and Witzleben (for the second time) by Hitler's order, in 1942. The soldiers in the plot who were on active service were staff and administrative officers, and to give it efficacy the conspirators needed at least one general in active command of a large body of troops. For this they searched wearily during four years, and at last they found one in Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, commanding Army Group B in France; but he only consented to collaboration a week before the attempt, and on the 17th of July, three days before it was made, he was gravely and almost fatally wounded in a R.A.F. attack on his car. Whether Rommel's late adherence could have ensured a successful counter-revolution must remain a question mark, but it was the best hope of the conspiracy. Without him it went forward without the army, without national backing, the act of a minority against the head of the State. This gave the conspiracy a bad name in Germany, not only among Nazis. The war had left hatred in the air, and something of this bad name spread in the world outside. People did not want to admit the *Widerstand* to kinship with the national resistance movements of occupied Europe. It did not deserve the same honours. It is still looked on by many with vague suspicion.

THIS REACTION WAS as illogical as it was emotional, and took no account of the matter of principle for which the war was fought, and without which it was aimless. But emotional and illogical reactions are usually deeper than reasoned ones and harder to eradicate, especially when they are conjoined, illogically enough in this case, to rational objections.

It is objected, reasonably enough, that the leaders of the German army should have taken action against Hitler and the Nazi party long before July, 1944, in fact long before September, 1939. Few of them were real Nazis. Many were anti-Nazis. They had a way of regretting the *Führer*'s brutal decisions, and then, sometimes in deep sorrow, setting forth obediently to devastate Poland or whichever land was the victim of the moment. They came near to forming up and presenting Hitler with a united and dangerous opposition at the time of the Fritsch crisis in 1938, but on receiving orders for the invasion of Austria in March they "did their duty." So with Prague, so with Poland, so with Norway and the Low Countries, so with Russia. They were most unhappy about all these things, but they "did their duty," though frequently and always ineffectively they regretted the unhappiness that they thus caused to Hitler's prey. It is not surprising that their record moves many people to angry impatience.

IT COMES as a surprise to the non-German to find that in spite of their failure to rescue Germany from the consequences of their subservience to Hitler, the generals are often defended in their own country today, and I do not mean by Nazis or ex-Nazis. The argument usually runs as follows. Without revolutionary or political traditions to give him spiritual support, the only circumstance in which a movement against the head of state and supreme commander could be contemplated by a German senior commander was when the country was in danger. This danger is envisaged as being the case of impending military defeat. Other dangers cannot be measured with precision and so were and are considered as being matters of controversy. The danger of military defeat was not incontrovertibly clear in any of Hitler's initial acts of aggression, so the Generals in command, following this accustomed line of reasoning, were not to be blamed if, with scrupulous obedience, they "did their duty." It is further argued that it is to expect too much to insist that their scruples regarding obedience should have been overtaken by other scruples about acting as the instruments of a descent into barbarism and of a course of action which came near to terminating Western civilisation. They had been taught to provide against one danger alone. So the argument runs.

This defence is sometimes to be heard from people who not only look on the resisters with the sincerest admiration but have taken part in dangerous resistance activity. Such people regret that German military tradition and military education left commanders with such a narrow and inflexible attitude of mind, and one of such blindness to reality; but these people do not see it as a matter for blame, and so great has been the position that commanders have occupied in German history and tradition, so much has the devoted general become a father-figure in the modern folk-mythology of Germany, that such blame is often strongly resented when it comes from foreigners.

I hasten to say that I know many intelligent Germans who would not waste two minutes over such an argument as I have outlined above, and for whom the counter-argument is merely

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a waste of energy. For the purpose of this essay I must give the counter-argument all the same.

The defence of the generals indicated above is based on the premise that they were not wicked but perfectly ordinary people like anyone else. People are not to be blamed for being mediocre. But the counter-argument insists that mediocre in character (as opposed to talent) as these men may have been, they occupied positions that were the reverse of second-rate: they held the destiny of their own people and of Europe in their hands, *and they knew it*. They were not people of very defective observation: their achievements prove the opposite. They did not lack for counsellors (Goerdeler for one) who warned them of the scale of their moral and political responsibilities. They knew all about the degraded condition to which Hitler was steadily bringing civilisation in Germany. Hundreds and thousands of their own soldiers were condemned to the concentration camps. They knew all that they needed to know, but they only sighed, and, except for Rommel at the very end, they did nothing to break Hitler and the Nazi party, a task that every delay made more difficult, while impending military defeat rapidly grew to a certainty. If they were very ordinary people, then their offence, given their position, was indeed that of culpable ordinariness; what theologians tellingly describe as "invincible ignorance."

I shall refer later to the one concerted plan of army leaders to take over from Hitler. For the moment I want to make the point that the defence of the German army leadership on the grounds of mediocre personality is mistaken and misses the real point. To insist on such mediocrity is indeed a gross calumny on those senior officers in the second rank of service who gave all and risked all against Hitler, in almost every case with fatal and indescribably cruel consequences for themselves.

THE DEFENCE SHOULD SURELY BE that Hitler with his uncanny *Fingerspitzengefühl*, his hunting dog's nose as we might say, had a marvellous sense of weakness in character. Going forward infallibly as a sleep-walker, he dismissed Witzleben through intuition in 1942, and all his senior appointments, good and bad, showed a perfect sense of that kind of character which, apart from vigour and ability, lacks the ultimate strength to go with clear judgment against majority or fashionable opinion.

Hitler, as a true-to-form despot, hated first-rate character in those who occupied subordinate positions. Pressure of work prevented him getting to know all but the most senior personnel. But he knew, with his unerring skill in such things, the kind of person, among those he met, in whom unswerving German national loyalty could be corrupted to his purpose. To such he gave the great commands. If he made a mistake it was with Rommel, and if he did so, it was certainly with misgiving.

THE RESISTERS KNEW ALL ABOUT German traditions of subservient loyalty, that obstacle to their hopes of achieving their great ambition, and they set to work to remedy the matter. As early as 1937 conspirators, within the services and the Foreign Ministry in Berlin, sent over secret emissaries to urge Britain and France to stand firm against Nazi aggression. After the invasion of Austria in March 1938 the emissaries came in greater numbers, assuring British officials that the reward of firmness would be a *coup d'état* led by the generals commanding in Berlin and its neighbouring areas. The *coup d'état* was delayed until Britain and France abandoned firmness at the Munich conference, and the generals concerned abandoned their conspiracy. The story is tangled and has been told many times. It is not easy even now to be perfectly sure what happened. Many of the accounts indulge in buck-passing at the expense of objective examination of the facts. It seems that one can make this generalisation: the conspirators in Germany did not appreciate that Britain and France, entirely through their own silly fault, were far too weak to stand firm, so that the lead had to come from within Germany; but without British and French firmness bringing about that needed state of impending defeat, the generals could not be unreservedly brought out of their inevitable self-question and doubt regarding their loyalty to the head of the state.

Chamberlain's mind was regularly biased against the emissaries by the supreme appeaser, Sir Nevile Henderson, but even if he had been fully trusting, the Prime Minister was being asked to gamble maximum stakes on the success of a *coup d'état* doubtful, in the recorded opinion of Witzleben (one of the generals in the conspiracy), because the obedience of the troops and junior officers in an anti-Nazi operation could not be counted on.

This event, or rather non-event, had the effect later of identifying all German conspirators

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against Nazism with hesitant generals. This is unfair and unhistorical because the conspiratorial object throughout was to obtain circumstances in which the generals could be recalled to a better sense of duty. But the mistaken identification may well be one reason why people outside Germany are so prone to reservations about the integrity of the *Deutsche Widerstand*.

AFTER MUNICH German anti-Nazi resistance entered a new phase. At first sight it is a puzzling one. As before there were a number of secret emissaries, but now they spoke in two voices. It is not certainly established by documentary evidence, but it would seem, from what records have survived and been published, that while there was no break in the solidarity of the anti-Nazi impetus which drove forward the military and Foreign Ministry conspirators, their mutual relations were more tenuous than they had been in 1938. Oddly enough, this is vividly indicated by a clerical error.

In 1961 Dr. A. L. Rowse published his fascinating book *All Souls and Appeasement*. In the 1930s he had become a close friend of Adam von Trott zu Solz, and he tells in moving terms of how their friendship had flourished and then cooled in the blighting atmosphere of what he took to be Trott's ambivalent attitude towards Nazism. His story is wonderfully well observed and precise until it comes to his account of the recorded interview in London of Trott and the once famous political operator behind the scenes, Doctor T. J. Jones, known in fashionable political circles as "T.J."

According to T.J.'s record of June 1939, quoted by Dr. Rowse, Trott urged that the British Government should make haste to include the "war-mongers" in the Cabinet, and by "war-mongers" he meant Winston Churchill, Anthony Eden and their following. Only thus, he assured Jones, would Hitler be convinced that an attack on Poland would mean world war. The advice was sound, but it is in contradiction to what everyone who met Trott remembers of what he said during that and subsequent visits to England in 1939. The explanation is simple. Jones edited his diary for publication after the war, and he ascribed to Trott, whom he described fallaciously as a "young German staff officer," remarks which were made to him by Colonel von Schwerin. The mistake was occasioned by the fact that he met both men through Mr. David Astor, and he evidently did not make a note of Schwerin's name at the time.

Schwerin's views can be read in a record of them made on 7 July 1939 by General Sir James Marshall-Cornwall, and published in volume VI (item 269) of *The Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919–1939*. Sir James met Schwerin with the Conservative Whip, Mr. James (now Lord) Stuart and the Director of Naval Intelligence. He took careful note of Schwerin's views. These, as recorded, correspond precisely to what is attributed to Trott in the Jones diary. They contain a clear expression of the policy that the emissaries of Admiral Canaris and his friends in the counter-espionage organisation which he controlled (the *Abwehr*) were urging on their British contacts. It was exactly the same as they had urged in 1938. Britain and France must stand firm, and be seen to stand firm, even to the point of obstinacy.

But the anti-Nazi opposition in the Foreign Ministry took a divergent line. It was in the main run by Ernst von Weizsäcker who was *Staatssekretär* in the *Auswärtige Amt*, a post corresponding to that of Permanent Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office. He was a diplomat who had a professional weakness for over-subtle and devious methods. He was a genuine anti-Nazi, but to reach his objective he trimmed his sails to the wind without recognising that such a procedure is of no avail in a typhoon.

He seems to have seen the situation and its solution as follows. Munich had changed the face of Europe; the post-Munich and post-Prague British guarantees to Poland and the East European states were an example of unintelligent persistence in policies once defensible and now out of date; a new approach was desirable and it could only be found through an adaptation of the Chamberlainite appeasement policy to radically altered circumstances.

I say that this "seems" to have been Weizsäcker's conception. It cannot be proved that it was. What can be proved is that there was without doubt an appeasement-style plan which envisaged a German proposal of withdrawal from Bohemia and Moravia, to be undertaken with British and French assurance that in return for such an act of "generosity" and "moderation" there would be British and French support for a revision in Germany's favour of the ever-burning question of the German-Polish frontier. Contemporary corre-

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spondence shows clearly that such a proposal was tried out in Paris, was the subject of an evidently calculated leak to the Polish press in the early summer of 1939, and was entrusted to Adam von Trott on his semi-official mission from the 1st to the 10th of June of that year. It is difficult to believe that the plan had any other origin than in Weizsäcker, but it is just conceivable that it had another undisclosed one.

IT IS ALSO CERTAIN that this Czech-Polish plan did ultimate damage to the reputation of its protagonist in England, Adam von Trott. "Ultimate" is an operative word here. At the time the plan helped his mission on in official circles. He seems (from the difficult feat of interpreting what is genuine and what is assumed in his official report which was intended, it must be remembered, for the eyes of Ribbentrop and Hitler) to have found some ready acceptance for the plan from Lord Lothian whom he met at Cliveden, and more guardedly from Neville Chamberlain whom he met through his Cliveden host, Lord Astor. Trott made the mistake of seeking also the opinion of Hubert Ripka, the eminent Czechoslovakian journalist and editor, then in London, and this added to a forming opinion, inevitable from the double life he had to lead, that Trott was a cleverly disguised Nazi agent, taking advantage of his acquaintance in the "Cliveden set" to pursue malign purposes.

From a letter written at the time Ripka seems to have believed that this unreal Czech-Polish scheme was Trott's own invention. This it was certainly not. On the one hand he was in no position, as an unofficially attached agent of the *Auswärtige Amt,* to propose great international projects on his own—it would have been mere silliness to have done so; on the other hand there is no evidence that he had any personal desire to put forward this particular plan. He was, to his misfortune, the message bearer. But he was a sincere advocate of a continuance of an appeasement policy towards Germany.

TROTT'S POSITION WAS, as so often in his short tragic life, a complex one, and it is worth looking at in these 1939 summer days, because his impact on British, and later on American opinion, had influence on British and American estimate of the character and purpose of the Resistance within Germany.

His own personal conviction (not to be confused with the plan of which he was made the advocate) was as follows. He believed, with the Chamberlainite appeasers, that a second world war must at all costs be avoided, no ignoble aim, but, unlike the classic appeasers of the Chamberlain school, he and those he spoke for believed that appeasement of Germany must be of a kind that involved the downfall of Nazism. He saw this in terms of a declaration of an accord generous to Germany made over the heads of the German *Führer* and Government to the German people. Thus, he believed, the basis of Hitler's power would be removed. Mr. William Douglas-Home has a valuable testimony to this effect from a conversation between Trott and Lord Halifax which he overheard at Cliveden.

It is a fact that Lord Halifax, then Foreign Secretary, was favourably impressed and went so far as to incorporate many of Trott's suggestions in a broadcast speech which he made to a Chatham House audience on 29 June.

The speech had no result. There was no way for the German people to respond to Halifax's generous sentiments except through the medium of a press dominated by Josef Goebbels, and the effect on Hitler, assuming he bothered to read a report, was likely to have been a mixture of contempt and expectation of a second Munich. British observers abroad (according to official documents) saw the speech as a monumental flop.

Trott's effort at encouraging a new and dynamic appeasement policy came too late. It was bound to fail. It was a valiant youthful effort to stop an immense disaster, and it ought to have been judged with every sympathy. Unfortunately, owing to his being saddled with the Czech-Polish plan, and through a serious mistake he made in returning to England later in that summer, finding himself unable to declare his anti-Nazism (for obvious security reasons) and thus unable to disabuse the natural perplexity of his English friends, he came to be looked on as one who had fallen from grace. When war broke out many of his former admirers reluctantly believed that this once exemplary opponent of Nazism had surrendered to the might and fascination of Hitler's regime.

IN OCTOBER OF 1939 Trott again set out on an unofficial diplomatic mission, this time to the United States. As before, his directing superior was Weizsäcker. Trott's new mission was simi-

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lar to his former one and adapted to altered circumstances. His overriding purpose was still to prevent world war; his immediate aim was to persuade political leaders in the United States to give, from their morally strong neutral position, open assurance to the non-Nazi public of Germany, and secret and detailed assurance to the conspiring anti-Nazis within Germany, that in the event of the *Reich* shaking itself free of Hitler and declaring its readiness for peace, America would see to it that equitable terms were offered.

Trott had been preceded in America by bad reports about him, both official and private, from Great Britain. From the beginning he had to battle against intense suspicion. His cover, that of attending a meeting of the Institute for Pacific Relations, was not convincing, and many people (giving way to the war-time aberration of spy-mania) saw in this advocate of American neutrality a crafty agent of Ribbentrop. Furthermore, his secret programme was manifestly tinged with "Appeasement," and by now appeasement was a dirty word.

The reaction both in Britain and America against Neville Chamberlain's once wildly popular and now ruined policy was of an unthinking violence which people of a later generation may find quite incredible. It was seriously stated and believed that any policy of appeasement towards anyone at all anywhere at any time was nothing more than criminal folly of the most atrocious kind. Appeasement, private people vehemently asserted, politicians proclaimed, and newspapers thundered, had always ended and always would end in ignominy and disaster. That the alternative was perpetual war without and repressive Government within was forgotten at a time when it almost seemed immoral to appease one's hunger and thirst. A German in 1939 advocating appeasement of any kind towards a Germany of any kind after the invasion of Poland was seen as a most dangerous and undesirable person, and when that same German was known to be a friend of the Astors and the "Cliveden Set," then the case against him seemed proved.

The suspicion which formed against Adam von Trott in the United States in 1939 and early 1940 reached such gigantic proportions that substantial remains of the hysteria are still to be found there today, nearly thirty years after. I hope my book may do something to diminish this vast accumulation of nonsense.

IT HAS BEEN ARGUED BY SOME that all these journeys abroad by Trott and others (those made from the Foreign Ministry rather than the more practical and precisely informative ones from the *Abwehr*) were a waste of time. Successful revolutions are not, as a matter of historical observation, preceded by an elaborate search for foreign support. So why did these would-be revolutionaries use up so much of their energy in making sure that they had sympathisers abroad, which they were sure of in any case? The argument is not without substance, but I think that a difference has to be noted between foreign contacts made by the resistance, especially that in the Foreign Ministry, before and after January 1943. Their object then becomes clear.

On the November day in 1919 when Field Marshal von Hindenburg declared to a commission of inquiry in Berlin that the military defeat of 1918 was the result of a *Dolchstoss*, a stab in the back, the old buck-passer introduced a new element into European politics which had influence on political conduct in the Second World War. The Germans are perhaps even more prone than most to blame other people for their errors and misfortunes. The legend of the *Dolchstoss* provided a perfect alibi for the shame of defeat, and in a wishful-thinking spirit it was believed by a great majority in Germany. It was the concern of everyone on the anti-Nazi side in the Second World War, both in Germany and without, to ensure against a revival of the myth, especially in a way harmful to themselves. At the same time the excuse of a stab in the back was sedulously cultivated by the Nazis in the later stages and was given final expression in Hitler's will.

FROM THE BEGINNING, the anti-Nazis of Germany were worried over the possibility that a successful internal movement which overthrew Hitler and his regime might appear in many German eyes as a cruel blow against the prosperity of the Fatherland: here was this *Führer*, people would say, who had thrown off the unjust restrictions of Versailles, who had restored Germany as a great power, and who was then cut off in his prime by a lot of nasty parliamentary-minded liberals who, for the sake of international concord—or rather the League of Nations preferred to return to a weak mediocre Germany torn by faction as in the days of the wretched Weimar republic. They preferred this to marching ahead with a new Germany renascent under the Swastika. Here was a stab

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in the back if ever there was one! Fear of such a public opinion undoing the work of an anti-Nazi rising made the political emissaries of the conspiracy seek assurance that they would not be asked to undo the constructive work of Nazism, or to acknowledge the Versailles terms; that they would be seen unmistakably by their countrymen as benefactors of their country. This was, I believe, the main driving force behind this search for foreign support up to 1943.

If its political purpose was sound, it cost the conspirators something in distrust, and may well be another reason for the lack of sympathy with which the resistance is often remembered. William L. Shirer, who gives a more friendly account than most in his book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (1960), is nevertheless moved to remark that the conspirators who went abroad seemed more interested in trying to arrange good terms for Germany than in ridding Germany and the world of Adolf Hitler.

IN THE SECOND HALF of the war there was a significant change in the policy of "*Dolchstoss* avoidance."

After January 1943 and the Casablanca Conference, it was the Allies who took the lead in making certain that this time there would be no such myth. This was one purpose of the demand for unconditional surrender. It has been said that this dubious act of policy, whose primary object was to curry favour with Stalin, made no difference to the genuine anti-Nazi conspirators. It is quite true that attempts to assassinate Hitler continued, attempts from which his escape was so consistent and uncanny as to present a temptation to superstition. But it is also true that the conspirators never (except in the frustrated last-minute case of Rommel) obtained the adherence of an army commander, and that remained to the end their most urgent need.

On the German anti-Nazi side, the supreme purpose abroad of the conspirators now was to obtain an assurance that unconditional surrender would not be exacted from a post-Hitler Government that had proved its anti-Nazism. In this aim the conspirators failed. I think there are four reasons for this.

1. 1942 had seen the beginning of the Nazi genocide policy, politely described as "The Final Solution." By 1943 it was widely known about and took a prominent part in Allied propaganda. The result was to add a new dimension to the hatreds of war and there sprang up a longing for vengeance on the Germans: no conditions were under any circumstances to be offered to such people.

2. Though unconditional surrender turned out to be unwelcome to Stalin (who wanted to exact Communist conditions), the policy, once proclaimed, could not be revoked, even partly, without adding yet further to Russian distrust and endangering the alliance.

3. As mentioned above, it was seen as the only way to make certain that such a surrender would force the Germans to accept defeat without any hope of stab-in-the-back escapism.

4. A minor reason, but quite enough to strengthen the above considerably, was the fact that, in many of the attempted negotiations in Switzerland and Sweden, the anti-Nazi representative was Adam von Trott and he remained very suspect in London and Washington.

By the force of a remarkable and winning personality, Trott was able to overcome a great deal of the suspicion attaching to him in the course of his secret interviews with British officials. By 1944, in the official world of London, there was evidently a party which favoured a discussion with him concerning possible concessions to the conspirators. But he was never able to break down the original suspicion more than in part, and so his attempt at negotiation remained incomplete and without result. He reported this faithfully to his fellow-conspirators.

When the conspirators finally moved to action on 20 July they knew that their hopes of success were slender. Rommel was out of action and their army backing was thus perilously slight. From recorded utterances of Stauffenberg, of his uncle Count Nikolaus von Üxküll, and of Trott, it is evident that the impetus behind the plot was reduced to a single and most noble one. They believed that the Nazis had sunk so deep in crime, blackening the reputation of the country for a generation at least, that the only hope of retrieving German honour was in a rising of Germans within the country against Hitler. Success had become a secondary consideration.

A year and a half before, there had been another rising and an even forlorner hope, driven on solely by this ideal. This was the rising of the students of Munich University, the action of the League of the White Rose, associated with the names of a brother and sister, Hans and Sophie Scholl. Their tragic attempt could never have achieved anything but martyrdom, but the July attempt had not much greater hope of immediate practical result. In the end the

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July conspirators brought about no more than did the young Scholls and their friends.

THE REAL AND ULTIMATE hope of both groups of conspirators lay in influencing the future, but if they did not fail in this respect, they did so in a far longer term than they had the right to expect. The attempt of July was debated in the House of Commons on 2 August 1944. Although the Government had had plentiful previous information about the conspiracy and its aims from Sweden, Switzerland and Portugal, the main speakers, Churchill, Greenwood, and Eden, were evidently feebly briefed and they spoke of the attempt as of a ruse to substitute Prussian military for Nazi tyranny. Mr. George Strauss, alone among the speakers, suggested its true nature. He was heard with irritation and interruptions. The debate ended with a dismal assertion by the Foreign Secretary that the policy of the Government remained unaltered. To superficial appearances, that was all that the conspiracy had achieved: a reassertion of the policy of unconditional surrender. It had failed as hopelessly as that, so it seemed.

I HAVE SUGGESTED some reasons why a coarse misjudgment has not before now been rigorously and totally reversed by the unerring sentence of time. In the long run it is sure to be so, but the run continues to be painfully long. Not all the fault is on the side of foreign opinion. For all their concern with the dangers of a *Dolchstosssmythus,* anti-Nazi Germans have themselves indulged in a certain amount of escapist legend. In some circles in Germany it is held as axiomatic that Chamberlain's failure to stake all on the Halder-Witzleben conspiracy of 1938 was a monstrous failure of statesmanship because the conspiracy was bound to succeed. Chamberlain is thus held to be guilty of condemning Germany to an unnecessary prolongation of Nazi rule and Europe to a second world war.

To say the least, this is a doubtful theory. Insistence on it has inevitably caused some exasperation. Trott's missions to England and America have been represented as the masterstrokes of a man of the highest political vision, frustrated by narrow men incapable of grasping the value of his message. It is far wiser to face the fact that Trott was no political genius, and that, since his authentic political sense was never sharpened by adequate practical experience, his political thought rarely rose above the enlightened commonplaces of the day. He was a bold and untrained amateur of diplomacy who was capable of flashes of real insight. But the complexity of his personality, with his occasional tendency to the fantastic, sometimes confused himself and often perplexed those whom he approached. Before the war he was used unwisely by his superiors and was sometimes unwise himself. The suspicions about him were and are ridiculous, but some suspicion was inevitable, given the fact that (for the highest motives) he chose to lead a double life. Defensive insistence by his admirers on an unreal picture of him obscures his genuine merits which were those of passionate idealism strengthened by an invincible sincerity. As a negotiator he was seen at his best, not in his irruptions into pre-war diplomacy, but in reaching agreement with resisters in occupied Europe. Hero-worshipping claims that he was politically infallible throughout merely confuse.

But when all is said, the case against the German resisters, that little minority who at all risk worked for German liberation, is really non-existent. To remember it almost argues some lack of generosity, so great is the case in their favour. For the criticisms which can be levelled at the resisters, and those who keep their memory alive, are trivial matters compared to the virtue they showed to the world. They gave an example of physical and moral courage of the highest imaginable kind. One incident, typical of them all, may be rememberered. Adam von Trott knew more than most of them about what personalities were involved. His interrogation was more protracted, and, one must conclude, was even more cruel than was usual. Not one single name was extracted from him; the interrogation led to no other arrest. His case was not unique.

The non-national character of the active resistance to Hitler in itself laid a heavy burden on these brave men. They could never for an instant enjoy that sense of being surrounded by thousands and millions of well-wishers among their countrymen, such as gave stimulus and constant support to men and women of the resistance movements in occupied Europe. The difficult road they followed was one of terrible loneliness. In July 1944 Stauffenberg well described the feelings of those who did not fear to travel that way: "He who has the courage to do this, must do it in the knowledge that he will go down to German history as a traitor. But if he does not do it, then he will be a traitor to his own conscience."

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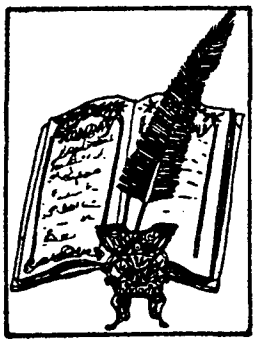

Column

CALDER AND BOYARS have now published a second edition of *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, with a foreword describing the curious fortunes of the book as it progressed through the murky labyrinths of the English law. Having given evidence for the defence in the original prosecution at the Marlborough Street Magistrates' Court, I need not emphasise my own conviction that the book is not obscene, in the legal sense, and that if it were, its publication was in the public interest, which is a sufficient answer to the charge. The magistrate, however, Mr. Leo Gradwell, decided otherwise; and so did the jury when the book was prosecuted for the second time at the Old Bailey. I myself have the impression that neither the magistrate nor the jury paid the slightest attention to anything I said in the book's defence or to the evidence of the long and distinguished list of defence witnesses who testified at the Old Bailey.

The second case was much the more important, as it was brought by the Director of Public Prosecutions under Section 2 of the Obscene Publications Act, which involves a criminal charge; the first case was a private prosecution, and the magistrate's decision had no force outside his own district. The costs to the publishers of the two cases had been considerably in excess of £13,000; nevertheless they decided to continue with the case, and on appeal the verdict at the Old Bailey was reversed, on the grounds, firstly, that the judge had failed to instruct the jury properly with regard to the defence against obscenity, and secondly, that he had failed to guide them on how they should balance the merits of the book against its obscenity, if they found that to be proved. I must confess that I have considerable sympathy with the judge for his failure; trying to explain the precise meaning of the Obscene Publications Act to a jury must be rather like trying to explain the subtleties of the Athanasian Creed to a Chinese.

Indeed, perhaps one of the benefits of the Court of Criminal Appeal's judgment may be that, in future, courts may be inclined to accept the definition of "obscenity" offered by Mr. John Mortimer, Q.C., which is that "to deprave and corrupt" means to make people behave worse than they would have otherwise, or to blur their sense of the difference between right and wrong. If this definition were accepted, a good deal of the evidence for the prosecution both in the magistrate's court and at the Old Bailey would have been irrelevant. Another indirect benefit of the appeal was the foundation of the *Defence of Literature and the Arts Society*, in order both to provide funds to enable the publishers to continue with the case, and to raise funds for the defence in future cases of prosecution.

So THE CASE of *Last Exit to Brooklyn* has had a happy ending; but only in a very limited sense. The publishers are free to publish the book without fear of further prosecution and the Obscene Publications Act has been amended to prevent the kind of private prosecution which was originally brought against it. But the costs incurred by the defence are still sufficient to deter most publishers from running the risk of a criminal charge; and the judgment of the Court of Criminal Appeal does not do much to help them make up their own minds about when, in fact, they are breaking the law.

Such doubts and uncertainties leave publishers in a very unenviable position. It has been suggested, indeed, that in order to minimise the risk of prosecution, publishers should institute a system of self-censorship, exercised by some advisory body acting on behalf of the publishing trade as a whole; but one cannot help feeling, and many publishers do in fact feel, that this might in practice have a far more repressive effect than even the present unsatisfactory state of affairs. The idea of a kind of Hays Code for literature is not a very attractive one.

But if the position of publishers in relation to censorship is an unhappy one, the theatre is in an even more unfortunate state. Publishers after all have by now considerable experience of the shifts, vagaries, and uncertainties of the law and a good many precedents to guide them in calculating the risks which they undertake. Moreover, the Obscene Publications Act, despite its weaknesses, does now afford them a considerable degree of protection; while the case of *Last Exit to Brooklyn* provoked the hope, initially at least, that the Director of Public Prosecutions is now inclined to exercise his discretion in favour of toleration rather than repression.

The theatre, however, since the abolition of the Lord Chamberlain's office, has been launched on an uncharted sea, with few precedents as a guide and no body of experience to fall back on in deciding what does and what does not offend against the law. Moreover, the kind of purely commercial considerations which

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urge the publisher into paths of discretion play an even larger part in the theatre because the financial risks involved are so much larger; theatrical managers may soon begin to think that, since the Lord Chamberlain does not exist, it may be necessary to invent him. It would be sad indeed if the otherwise unlamented demise of the Lord Chamberlain were to lead, not to a régime of greater freedom for the theatre, but to a censorship exercised by theatrical managements less interested in morality, or even in entertainment, than in money.

BUT PERHAPS IT IS PRECISELY these kinds of ambiguities, obscurities, uncertainties, the lack of clear definitions, that give such dense chiaroscuro to English life and sometimes lead to those ironic, sometimes comic, results which give it half its flavour. One of the most flamboyant and aggressive witnesses for the prosecution in the private action brought against *Last Exit to Brooklyn* was Captain Robert Maxwell, M.P., a gallant soldier, philoprogenitive millionaire, and self-appointed guardian of British public morality. It was Captain Maxwell who was so "horrified that any one of my eight children may be exposed to this kind of filth," and he, Sir Charles Taylor, M.P., and Sir Basil Blackwell formed a trio which exemplified the principle that the sterner the moralist the quicker he is to smell out temptation.

Captain Maxwell has now made a £34 million take-over bid for that great British institution, the *News of the World*, as much a pillar of the British Sunday as the Church of England itself, and certainly with many more practising adherents. At this moment one does not know what the *News of the World* shareholders think of the offer, or of Captain Maxwell; but one cannot help feeling that its over 6,000,000 readers, which give it the proud claim to have the largest circulation in the world, should be consulted before any final arrangements are made. Not that Captain Maxwell intends to interfere in any way with the paper's policy or its editor's freedom. No newspaper proprietor ever does; who could possibly claim that Lord Thomson had made any difference to *The Times*? Yet somehow newspapers always do change when they get a new proprietor; usually indeed rather more than when they get a new editor; so the *News of the World*'s devoted readers would be quite right to wonder whether this Savonarola-like moralist is really the man to preserve that delicate balance between muckraking and puritanism which gives the paper its unique appeal.

The *News of the World* has always claimed that, by frankly exposing those facts about English life which other papers see fit not to print, it is performing an indispensable service to public morals, and that without that camera eye and deadpan prose which it devotes to the police courts, we should never really know what kind of country we live in. How can we recognise sin unless it is portrayed in all its foulness? There is much to be said for the claim; I have often thought that to read, say, the *Observer*, all house-and-garden plus Nora Beloff's private line to Downing Street, and the *News of the World*, where everything seems to come out of the lower depths, is like reading about two entirely different planets, inhabited by two entirely different races, with not the remotest similarity in customs or morals; and who is to say which gives the truer account?

But Captain Maxwell cannot hope to preserve the character of the paper merely by strict adherence to the principle of editorial freedom. The *News of the World* doesn't spring fully born out of its editor's head. Its present editor, who does not appear to like Captain Maxwell's initiative, has explained that, not editorial freedom, but the peculiarly close and intimate relationship between proprietor and editor is the real secret of the *News of the World*'s success, of its moral strength as well as its weakness for the shabbier aspects of human nature. When we read the *News of the World* on Sunday, we must not think of it as the product of a single editorial brain. We must think of it as the child of a true meeting of minds between grave, responsible, and immensely respectable men, concerned to ensure that vice shall never go unpunished because it escapes our notice, and that every week the British public shall recognise its true face in the mirror it holds up to crime in the Gorbals, sexual aberration in Huddersfield and wife-swapping in the West Country. I somehow doubt if Captain Maxwell has a real feeling for this sort of thing.

How can Captain Maxwell hope to live in, and with, this atmosphere, compounded as it is both of Old England's liking for dirt and her capacity for being shocked by it? I can see that he would do very well at maintaining the high moral tone, the "big bow-wow" which is essential to every *News of the World* exposure (or exposé, as it prefers to call it) of the sexual orgies of bribed footballers or the sado-masochist frauds of dry goods salesmen in the North Riding. But has he the eye, and the nose, for those peculiarly domestic, parochial, parish pump details which reveal the true genius of the paper when Sir William Carr and his editor are working really harmoniously together? Will he keep the *News of the World* the paper which knows that it is worth reporting divorce court proceedings which reveal that a Coventry housewife has for a lifetime persecuted her

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husband by placing a grilled kipper in his bed every night? It is only worth a few throw-away lines in the paper, but where should we be without it? And what is going to happen to Captain Maxwell's eight children, protected though they may be against *Last Exit to Brooklyn*, if they are exposed to these kinds of facts? I like to think of the conversation at breakfast on a fine summer Sunday at Headington, the sun glinting on the lawns and the swimming pool, as the papers arrive warm from the presses and, each with his or her own copy, his eight children begin to question Daddy about the more recondite paragraphs in his new periodical. "Daddy, what is bestiality? There seems to be another case of it at Aylesbury."

I do not believe Captain Maxwell is the man for this sort of job. He is after all of Continental origin, and foreigners, however well acclimatised here, do not really have the feel of that particularly English sub-culture, part proletarian, part bucolic, both sordid and comic, and already fading into the past, which the *News of the World* brings to our breakfast table every Sunday. Even though it may lay me open to a charge of racial discrimination, I would dare to proclaim that only a true-born Englishman is fit to control the *News of the World*.

*

THE PRESIDENTIAL election in the United States fell upon the last possible day for this column to go to press, and as the hours passed before the result was announced, it became painfully clear to me that when it was all over I should be left with very little time for reflection. Yet since Truman's campaign of 1948, no observer has risked anticipating the result of a Presidential election, however foregone it might seem, and Humphrey's had much in common with it. Indeed, watching the results on television, one felt that the commentators were quite unnaturally constricted by the imponderables of the election. There was no scope for those broad generalisations, those subtle interpretations of what is happening in Cook County, which are so dear to them. How can one interpret the significance of an election to others if one has not the slightest idea of what the result is going to be? As time went by, Messrs. McKenzie, Burnet, Michelmore, *et al.* became less and less like their informed and assured selves and more and more like men from Ladbrokes, and the horse-race analogy became more and more frequent in their comments.

Yet long before the result was known, the election had already developed one feature which confounded the predictions of many observers. Before the election it had been frequently and confidently asserted, notably by Miss Mary McCarthy, that everyone was sick of the whole tawdry business and that the only response it inspired in millions of Americans was apathy, boredom and indifference; disgruntled Democrats in particular would register their opinions, not by voting, but by not voting. In fact, there was a record poll, and it was this most of all which made it possible for Humphrey to run Nixon so unexpectedly close.

How was this heavy poll to be explained? Partly, no doubt, by the renewed hopes of peace in Viet Nam inspired by President Johnson's announcement of a halt in the bombing of the North; and if the announcement had been more favourably received in South Viet Nam, it is possible that it might have carried Humphrey even closer to victory. But partly also because the political situation in America does in fact involve violent passions; and men and women do not really stay away from the polls when their political feelings are deeply involved, if they are given the chance to vote.

One should, no doubt, as a good democrat (and a good Democrat) rejoice that Americans went to the polls in such large numbers. But what their votes really meant remains, even though the result is known, as obscure as ever; for in no recent Presidential election have issues been less plainly stated, policies more vaguely declared, or the electors offered such blurred and misty alternatives. Their choice was no easier whether they felt Measures not Men, or Men not Measures, was what really mattered, for the measures were not forthcoming, while the men, as represented by the two leading candidates, could only not be called faceless because their faces had been so overexposed. Perhaps, indeed, in the end a face was the best thing to vote.

WATCHING THE candidates on the screen, it was almost impossible to believe in the reality of these three men who were contending for the greatest political office in the world. I am intrigued by the theory, propounded by Russell Baker of the *New York Times*, that both Nixon and Humphrey, as born and predestined losers except when matched against one another, were nominated because neither of their respective parties wished to bear responsibility for governing America for the next four years; each chose their best loser. During the campaign, not a word was spoken, not a gesture made, which conflicted with this theory; and only Wallace (alas!) gave the impression that he was anything except a machine-made product of an obsolescent political system which had ceased to perform the function for which it was designed.

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London

A PROTEST *demonstration in which books were burnt on a Kensington footpath was described at Wells Street Magistrates' Court yesterday, by Police-constable J. Morrison, who said that the demonstrators formed a semi-circle outside a bookshop.*

"A blue brick was placed on end in the centre of the footway and two books placed on it," he said. "Then daffodils were scattered on it and it was set alight and smouldered. I believe it is a form of art called skoob." *He alleged that the demonstration had caused obstruction.*

Charges of obstruction against three men and a woman were dismissed. All had pleaded Not Guilty.

Mr. M. Polden, for the defence, told the Court: "This was a peaceful protest in a way that has been going on for many years past." Kensington Church Walk had been used by such people for decades "and London is a richer place for it," he added.

Mr. H. C. Rowe, the magistrate, said: "We are not satisfied that the degree of obstruction complies with the Act." THE TIMES

London

PUBLISHING MEN *here and in America are astonished by details leaking out of Sir William Haley's latest project as head of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. A Japanese edition needing over 2,000 translators is to be launched.*

The Japanese edition will be the fourth in a foreign language. Spanish and Portuguese ones are well established and I am told that a volume of the forthcoming French edition has been completed.

For France, of course, the word "Britannica" is being dropped. DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

THE PRETTY ABYSMAL *English translation of* Humanae Vitae *has roused indignation. Even before encyclical publication, the Catholic Truth Society decided not to put out the English version under their own imprint because —full of experience and forebodings—they knew the official Vatican translation would be bad. On careful textual analysis, so it proved. C.T.S. officials reckon the version sent to Britain was a translation from Italian, not the original Latin: and its tortuous language is definitely "off-putting." One sentence in the English issue, they say, doesn't appear to be in the original at all. There are minor mistranslations like "serious motives" for "good reasons." There are needlessly turgid sentences like: "Moreover, working and lodging conditions, as well as increased exigencies both in the economic field and that of education, often make the proper education of an elevated (sic) number of children difficult today." One gets the point of the row.* THE GUARDIAN

Frankfurt-am-Main

HUMAN RIGHTS, *as formulated in the famous U.N. Declaration of 1948, are no longer up-to-date. They need to be re-formulated to meet the needs of a new generation. This was the thesis of the official Papal delegate to the U.N.'s Human Rights Commissioner, in a lecture delivered here to the Königstein Conference. His reasons are that the wording of the original declaration was influenced too strongly by liberalism and the ideas of Anglo-Saxon civilisation.* DIE WELT

Paris

LE JAZZ. *Nous poursuivons la publication de l' "Anthologie du disque"—Bop, cool, néo-bop et soul.* LE MONDE

London

THE BISHOP OF EXETER, *Dr. Robert Mortimer, has persuaded Sotheby's to withdraw from auction a 17th-century "loyalty" book bearing the signatures of West Country clergy who signed the oath of allegiance to Charles II at the Restoration.*

If the book had fallen into a dealer's hands he would have sold signed pages separately.
DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

ABOUT *400 authorities are quoted in the new Sherlock Holmes book, discussing from the evidence of the Conan Doyle stories such questions as: Was Holmes an American? Was Watson really a woman? Was Holmes the real discoverer of atomic energy? Was the illustrious client Edward VII?*

A thing that stumps them all is the disappearance of Watson's dog.

"I keep a bull pup," he said, when he and Holmes were revealing their idiosyncrasies before agreeing to share 221b Baker Street.

Baring-Gould offers five explanations, the most pleasing of which is that the pup was accidentally killed by Watson, who stumbled while carrying him up the 17 stairs to the sitting-room. But the answer is surely in the mystery of how Watson, at the time living in a private hotel in the Strand, could have kept a pup at all.

Obviously he could not and did not. The expression "I keep a bull pup" is North-West Frontier slang meaning that the user has fits of quick temper. This is an original contribution, by the way, which I hope [Peter Black writes] later players of the game will acknowledge.
DAILY MAIL

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THEATRE

Bald Remarks On "Hair"

By John Weightman

When we went into the theatre, slightly grubby and hirsute boys and girls, dotted around the auditorium and the stage, were making those slowly convulsive movements that young people also seem to go in for at advanced poetry readings. They gyrate with raised arms and closed eyes, undulate like seaweed, follow the contours of some invisible mystic vortex, as if they were so many sibyls or sorcerers drunk on sacred fumes. Since this drifting self-absorption is common in American underground films, I suppose it represents the state of being "sent" or "high." If this is what marijuana does, it is quite pretty to watch, not bleak and grisly like the fumblings of the hard drug addicts I have seen around midnight in Montparnasse.

As we took our seats, a radiantly smiling girl, got up like an unorthodox squaw, handed my companion a slightly *passé* yellow chrysanthemum. At first I took her to be part of the audience, because there were so many people around us dressed in lace curtains or remnants of furnishing brocade that the distinction between performer and spectator was difficult to establish. However, I later decided that she must be a member of the cast welcoming us with love, love, love. It may not be all we need, but we can always do with a little more, even if it is slightly professional. Or perhaps she was saluting my companion's hair, which hangs down in an ample shower and almost meets the hem of her rising skirt. In either event, I was able to settle back happily with a receptive mind.

But to be quite honest, if one was expecting to be startled, *Hair* comes rather as an anti-climax. The actual performance did not seem to contain any features that have not already been present in other *avant-garde* productions. *Marat-Sade* was much dottier, *U.S.* more passionately political, some American underground films more positively erotic, and Arrabal's *Le Cimetière des voitures* more gleefully barbaric. I don't know how long *Hair* has been running in New York, but I suspect that certain of its peculiarities must have seeped across to Europe during the Lord Chamberlain's unconscionable agony, and we have got used to them. At any rate, although I kept waiting for the shock, none occurred. The young people woke up suddenly from their poetic driftings, the orchestra maintained an almost constant barrage of good, thumping music, the story-line wobbled uncertainly into motion as it usually does in musicals and, as usual, was interspersed with weak jokes, stilted bits of dialogue and a sprinkling of sentimental ditties, some quaintly poised between parody and seriousness. Although moon was never made to rhyme with June, xxxx did not rhyme with xxxx as often as one might have expected. Nevertheless, I have to report that the audience went wild. They whistled and shouted *bravo* and, at the end, many of them leapt up on to the stage and disappeared into the dusty pandemonium. I wondered if they were not responding more to the myth of *Hair* than to the show itself. Perhaps we should have stayed to see whether saturnalia really developed in the wings, but this thought did not occur to me until we were on our way home.

In spite of the din and the flashing lights, the one surprising thing about the performance, in comparison with other *avant-garde* shows, was its lack of aggressiveness. The theme, basically, is another protest against the Viet Nam war. A boy belonging to a drifting herd-like mass of drop-outs receives his call-up papers and, after trying ineffectually to escape his fate, has to submit and is shorn of his anarchistic locks. But these events are commented on wrily, rather than pugnaciously; it is as if the pet lamb of the flock had been snatched from the pastoral bliss of the hippie world and rudely clipped by Them, the grown-ups, the incomprehensible people who run society on the strange assumption that it is a serious, going concern. The flock itself, which keeps scattering and reforming in a manner more animal than human, is a micro-society within society, dressed in oddments, living presumably at subsistence level, copulating in heaps and composed of members who are all vaguely interchangeable, although they are still slightly bothered at times about the fact that *A* may prefer *B* who prefers *C*. What the music seems to suggest is that they are at their happiest when twitching and stamping in chorus. Each jerks and jangles separately, like a puppet on an invisible string, but they are all held together by the rhythm, which irons out uncertainty and solitude and beats on steadily to a collective climax. I suppose this is the dance as sublimated group orgasm, which would perhaps explain why the audience got so excited. The actors gave the impression—whether deliber-

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ately or not I cannot say—of performing for themselves rather than for the public, and this too was refreshing.

THE TERM "tribal musical," which is used in the programme, is perfectly justified. For one thing, the performers are a crowd, not a chorus-plus-stars. They are physically nondescript, only one of them—Oliver Tobias, who does not have the central role—being conventionally beautiful in the theatrical manner. None of the women appear to have been chosen for their looks, and the most forceful of them was a pinched-faced little person bulging below with pregnancy padding. It is curious that "beautiful" people should be presented as lacking in beauty, or should be at pains to disguise such beauty as they have under odds and ends of indifferent clothing. In the nude scene, which was chastely limited to a fleeting glimpse, I spied a girl with a splendid body, but nothing was made of it outside this one, thirty-second vision. Had she been in a traditional chorus, she would have jigged from left to right and from right to left at intervals, and her naked limbs would have earned their keep by working like pistons. I am not saying that this would have been better; I am not arguing in favour of the traditional chorus, which I have always thought rather comic and non-erotic; I am only trying to define an impression of puritanism at one remove, of deliberate scruffiness, of rejection of romantic prettiness or obvious physical appeal in a show that one expected to be sensual.

It *is* sensual, collectively rather than individually, if such a distinction can be given a meaning. And it is this collectiveness without a hierarchy that the elderly spectator senses as foreign. I found myself looking for the star and watching Tobias, because he was particularly shapely and agile, yet feeling at the same time that he wasn't meant to be more prominent than the rest. He just happened to be noticeable, in the way that one African dancer, thanks to his superior physique, may stand out to some extent from an anonymous tribal mass. It would take me some time to get used to this direct democracy on the stage, because it blurs the aesthetic effect. I realise that I like to know, in watching any performance, exactly what the pattern of importance of the actors or dancers is meant to be, and the show is imperfect if some secondary part is much better played than a primary one. But I imagine that, in the hippy world, such definiteness is anathema, and that *Hair* explicitly set out to reject it. However, in that case, why did only two or three of them take their clothes off in the nude scene? And did they stand motionless with genuine poetic intent, or in ironical deference to the Lord Chamberlain's old rule about nudes having to look like statues? I would have expected the whole cast to throw their garments into the wings and to romp porkily, like Cézanne's *Baigneuses*. Standing still for thirty seconds in a dim light was effective enough in its own way, but strangely solemn, as if they were saying: "Here is that sacred object, the naked body. Look upon it with awe," whereas the rest of the performance would seem to imply that only squares could have such feelings, the true hippie taking all the natural manifestations of the flesh in his stride.

IN THE LAST RESORT, the dominant impression was one of bracing vitality and slightly muddled innocence. The young men said fucking this and fucking that, and made jokes about penises. From what my grandchildren tell me about their play-group, I gather that tiny tots now chortle about this sort of thing over their morning cocoa. Perhaps they always did, and the adult world is just recapturing publicly the Heaven that lies about us in our infancy. My billy is bigger than yours, plus cocoa, later becomes my billy is bigger than yours, plus pot. If so, the linguistic and intellectual gain is imperceptible, and indeed there was practically nothing in *Hair* on the level of articulated implications or convincing lyrics, except the charming song made up of the learned words for sexual perversions, which owed its effect precisely to the fact that it was sung as children sing hymns, mouthing the words with no regard to the meaning. It seemed to me that the songs hardly counted, and were only put in to provide pauses between the vigorous, mindless, tribal stampings into which each of them eventually merged. What mattered was the pulse-beat of blind nature, hammering through these young limbs, raising clouds of dust and threatening to bring down the antiquated theatre which no doubt once vibrated in time to those milder intimations of nature, the can-can and the Charleston.

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John Holloway

Brief Lives

(i) Churching

give hearty thanks
thou hast delivered
the father
be her tower

the sun shall not burn

levari oculos

(ii) Baptism

come these infants
suffer
little children
give thyself to this transitory

vain flesh desires glory
give thyself to
innocency of
this transitory

life a man ought to
know and believe
his soul's health

credo

(iii) Confirmation

my hands picking and stealing
my tongue evil speaking
to get my own living

thou art not able
thou art bound

what dost thou chiefly learn—?

rehearse

(iv) Matrimony

undefiled members

an excellent mystery
an estate in paradise
my body is a pledge

with my lusts and beasts
for better for richer
men are bound to love

let him now
the hid man which is in the heart
love and
depart
unto the third and fourth

or
hereafter for ever hold his
peace

beati omnes

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(v) Visitation

he hath laid me
I stretch forth
I am become a monster
my tongue all the day long
after this painful life
everlasting
thy accustomed sickness

it shall turn to your profit

speravi

our door into

gladly

death

(vi) The Communion of the Sick

verily I say unto

all men be subject

all men in a readiness

(vii) Burial

cut down the secrets of our hearts
the strangers and widows
but a short time
cast upon the body

a natural body
flesh and blood cannot inherit
we shall be changed
it shall turn into
a flower in the midst of life

dilexi

whosoever believeth in
the earth
the last enemy is
a shadow

quemadmodum
all other departed
death is thy sting

the trump shall be changed man
a quickening of the
incorruptible
earth

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NOTES & TOPICS

Guevara, Man & Myth

I FIRST MET Che Guevara in the summer of 1960, when he gave me an appointment somewhere around midnight at the National Bank of which he was then Director. The hour was not unusual as he normally worked right through from 11.30 a.m. till 4 a.m. the next morning. He was dressed—as he always was, even at the rare receptions he attended—in his open-necked olive green uniform, parachute boots, and a pistol in its holster. (In three years I never saw him wear a tie; Fidel Castro only twice. This, I think, was a fair measure of their respective intransigence.) His body-guard slept fully clothed on a palliasse in the corner, and somehow he did not seem out of place. Someone had removed the target from the door, which Guevara used to shoot at with an air pistol, but as the session proceeded there was no hiding the fact that this was the office of a reluctant and slightly contemptuous government official, whose real interest lay elsewhere.

I was not surprised, then, to read the letter he wrote to his parents five years later when he decided to abandon officialdom, wife, children, and Cuban citizenship and return to the life of a guerrilla.

> Once again [he wrote] I feel between my heels the ribs of Rosinante.... Almost ten years ago today I wrote you another letter of farewell... [since then] nothing has changed in essence, except that I am much more aware, my Marxism has taken root and become purified. I believe in the armed struggle as the only solution for those peoples who fight to free themselves, and I am true to my beliefs. Many will call me an adventurer—and that I am, only of a different sort—one of those who risks his skin to prove his platitudes. It is possible that this may be the finish. I don't seek it, but it is within the logical realm of probabilities. If it should be so, I send you a last embrace.
>
> I have loved you very much, only I have not known how to express my fondness. I am extremely rigid in my actions, and I think that some times you did not understand me. It hasn't been easy to understand me....
>
> An *abrazo* for you from your obstinate and prodigal son.
>
> *Ernesto*

I quote this not merely as an intensely human document, but more particularly because it helps to get through to the man behind the fashionable myth that is being inflated around him. The fact is, that in these last years he was at the mercy of two simple but totally obsessive beliefs: first, that only violent revolution can save this imperialist-ridden world; and second—and this was almost pathological—that he must bring this about himself, the hard way, as a guerrilla. Guerrilla warfare was for him at the same time an addiction and a form of personal therapy. In the last summer of his life, in the little German diary in which he kept the jottings of his final campaign, he wrote: "This type of struggle gives us the opportunity not only to turn ourselves into revolutionaries, the highest level of the human species, but it also allows us to graduate as men...." There are, as we shall see, elements of classic inevitability in the story of his life that led up to the final curtain.

Ernesto "Che" (the *ch* is soft as in "chum," which is what Cubans will tell you it means) Guevara Lynch was born forty years ago in Rosario in the Argentine. His father, a relatively wealthy architect, was of Irish descent, liberal in his politics (as was his mother) and fond of his five children of whom Ernesto was the first. As a handsome, fresh-faced medical student, who in spite of chronic asthma played rugby football in the 2nd XV and golf at his local athletic club, there was little in the young Ernesto's behaviour to suggest that he would not grow up as respectable as his lawyer brother or his architect sister. True, he read Baudelaire and was angry about poverty and social injustice in Latin America, but that was *de son age* as was his urge to go off and see for himself "how other people lived." There was a hitch-hiking tour of most of Latin America, which had begun disastrously on a far too old motor-cycle; a stint in a leper colony followed by a trip down the Amazon on a raft knocked together for him and his friend by the grateful inmates; odd jobs as a labourer, dishwasher, truck driver, street photographer and even a football coach. Then little by little his youthful nonconformism began to harden into radical political convictions. It only needed the shock of U.S. intervention in Guatemala, where he was working underground at the time, and the consequent overthrow of the Arbenz government to set him firmly on his revolutionary career.

THE POINT OF NO RETURN was, undoubtedly, the day in 1956 when together with Fidel Castro and eighty ill-trained, sea-sick companions he landed from a motor launch called "Granma" on the south-east shores of Cuba. (There seems to be no foundation, incidentally, to the story with its apostolic overtone that only Castro and

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twelve followers survived the landing.) Their intention was to overthrow the régime of the dictator and former army sergeant Batista, a régime so monumentally corrupt that even the middle class and the rich had had enough. But Batista had the army behind him, and theirs was a crazy undertaking which at that time no one but themselves took seriously.

From now on it is easier to keep tabs on Guevara's movements for he has left us an account of much of his life and that of his fellow revolutionaries in the campaign that followed. There was much courage and great loyalty, cowardice and treachery, near annihilation and victories against impossible odds. There were weeks of starvation diet, when roast cat and malanga were the gastronomic highlights; there was incompetent bungling and reckless stupidity; and every day brought violence and death. Then, as their experience grew, the tide turned and carried them on, incredibly, to final victory. After two years of outlawed existence, they awoke on 1 January 1959 to find that Batista had fled and Cuba was theirs.

THE COUNTRY was theirs but this oddly assorted band of revolutionaries was totally unfitted and unprepared to govern it. They had had vague discussions on some of Guevara's ideas on agrarian reform, but until the Cuban Communist Party shrewdly joined up with them on the eve of victory they had not read a dozen pages of political science or economy between them. I remember how Guevara used to love to tell the story of how he got his job as Director of the National Bank. "Fidel," he said, "was asking around if any of us Revolutionary Leaders was a 'Communist,' and I said I was. It seems, however, that what he actually said was 'Economist,' which I certainly was not." The whole story of these two years in the Sierras has all the ingredients of a film still to be made by a director not afraid to depict the highly improbable.

For Guevara, it was his personal "finest hour." Here was high adventure, the challenge of physical hardship made almost unendurable by protracted bouts of asthma, all in a cause in which he passionately believed. Beginning as the expedition's doctor he soon became the accepted expert on education, propaganda, and guerrilla tactics. After a shaky start as leader of a small group, caused by what he himself attributed to a lack of self-confidence, he finally commanded a separate column, which he led in a brilliant operation some three hundred miles from the Sierras to the Escambray. It was a decisive move in the final victory which followed soon after.

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BUT AFTER VICTORY came the years between, the years of officialdom as Director of the National Bank and subsequently Minister of Industry. "Career-wise" it was a period of undreamed-of success, but for a man of his temperament they were long years of almost intolerable frustration.

Once in office there is no doubt that he tried with remarkable application and conscientiousness to make up for his inexperience, but he was completely out of tune with his mode of life and it was always showing through. How else explain the simple "Che" with which he signed the peso bills? (Some said it was because he knew how much the peso was really worth, and counter revolutionaries used to add a cross—*cruz* in Spanish—in front of the "Che" to make it read like Khrushchev.) Or his comment to a foreign journalist: "I am not an economist, only a student—and not among the best. The only advantage I possess is having a country in which to experiment...." He never concealed his contempt for inefficiency and the bureaucratic way of life. "You will need another factory to manufacture india-rubbers to erase the errors you have made in this one!" he said to the workers of a new pencil factory; and he described as the disease of "*reunismus*" the fashion amongst his over-zealous colleagues of summoning interminable meetings.

And all this time he was thinking nostalgically of life in the Sierras and chafing against the drift he saw around him, away from the white light of his own conception of pure communism. The "new man" he wanted to create, in some ways in his own image, was already being corrupted by considerations of financial gain; the new Cuba was beginning to think nationally of its own needs to the exclusion of the demands of humanity at large.

There was still greater heart-ache to come. It began with the shock and disillusionment of the Russian "betrayal" at the time of the Missile Crisis. It is clear from his subsequent speeches that from this moment on he regarded the U.S.S.R. and later even China as backsliders from the true faith. "The socialist countries," he told an Afro-Asian Economist Conference at Algiers, "are in a way accomplices of imperialist exploitation" and referred to "the immoral character of their trade with under-developed countries." These are strong words from the Minister of Industry of a country, depending (as Cuba did) on Soviet Russia for something like a million dollars a day in various forms of aid, and on China for the bulk of its rice. Then later, in the much quoted article he sent to the journal *Tricontinental*, he wrote these words:

> All our actions are a cry for war against imperialism and a clamour for the unity of the peoples against the great enemy of the human race—the United States of America. Wherever death may surprise us, it will be welcome, provided that this our battle cry reach some receptive ear, that another hand stretch out to take up our weapons, that other men come forward to intone our funeral dirge with the staccato of machine guns and new cries of battle and of victory.

It seems to me unnecessary to go further than Guevara's own words for an explanation of his flight from the Ministry in Havana to carry out his chosen mission in the mountains of Bolivia.

BUT HOW EXPLAIN the failure of that mission? Bolivia was the country in Latin America selected by Che Guevara himself as most suited for the launching of his long term plan to create "many Viet Nams," and thereby ultimately tie down the United States' army and ruin that country's economy. And yet after eleven months campaigning his followers seem to have numbered only seventeen when he was captured and—wounded, but still defiant ("Shoot, don't be afraid!")—shot to death in that village schoolroom in the Andes.

Of all the world's revolutionary figures Guevara must have been voted the one most likely to succeed in guerrilla activity in Latin America. He had so much in his favour: two years practical experience in the Sierras, author of the definitive manual on guerrilla warfare used by

The Raglan Quotient

IN LORD RAGLAN'S *book* The Hero, *published in 1936, the author gives a list of incidents common to the biographies of most legendary heroes. The list has 22 items, and the top scorer is Oedipus with 21. The highest score that Raglan gives for an historical, as opposed to mythical, hero is seven in the case of Alexander the Great.*

But Che scores much higher: like many heroes his childhood was spent in a far-away country (the Argentine); he was nearly killed in childhood (by asthma); on reaching manhood he went to his future kingdom (Cuba), where after a victory over the king and/or a giant, dragon or wild beast (Batista) he married, became king (or at least Minister of Industry), reigned uneventfully for a time, prescribed laws (writings on guerrilla warfare, etc.), later left his throne (Ministry) and city, after which he met with a mysterious death, at the top of a hill (in the mountains). His children did not succeed him, and his body was not buried. His Raglan quotient is thus at least 13. THE GUARDIAN

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revolutionaries the world over; he was tough physically, in spite of his asthma, highly intelligent, conscientious to a fault and utterly fearless. All in all, a fascinating mixture of harsh, metallic ruthlessness, when he believed it necessary to achieve his revolutionary ends, and a high degree of personal charm when he chose to turn it on: humorous, soft, and gentle, melting opposition with his large brown eyes. I have seen the wives and daughters of diplomats clustering around him on social occasions like schoolgirls round their favourite gym mistress. (Not that he encouraged them: I think that he was supremely indifferent.) On the one hand he could call for "hatred, intransigent hatred of the enemy, that makes a man an efficient, violent, selective, cold machine for killing." On the other he could write that "the true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of love. He must have a large dose of humanity." In short he seemed to have all the qualities for the job in hand—and yet he failed.

He failed for a variety of reasons, as has become clear from the recently published diary he kept during the operations in Bolivia. (What an extraordinary lapse of security this was for an experienced practitioner and instructor in guerrilla warfare to preserve intact an eleven months' accumulation of incriminating documents, revealing not only Cuban sponsorship of the undertaking but, worse still, names and details that compromised his collaborators!) At the root of this *débâcle* was "bad intelligence." How wildly mistaken he was when after his troops, in their first engagement, had killed eleven Bolivian soldiers, he wrote: "Perhaps this is the first episode of a new Viet Nam. . . ." The military and political appreciations on which he had planned his campaign seem to have been every bit as inaccurate as the situation reports on which the Americans based their Bay of Pigs fiasco. First an underestimation of the standing of President Barrientos among his people and a misreading of the temper of the peasants. A strong national resentment of the Cuban-led guerrilla movement came as an unpleasant surprise to Guevara. The Indian peasant farmers—for whom, in part at any rate, this revolt was being staged—preferred to inform the Bolivian army of the guerrillas' whereabouts rather than to join them. Guevara complains at one point that he has more arms than men—a new experience for him. "The mass of peasants does not help us at all. . . ."

He was wrong, too, in thinking that Sierra tactics would be equally successful in the vast mountains and valleys of the Andes. Nor does he seem to have taken into account the dangers of the Rio Grande in flood or the difficulties of food supplies in so sparsely populated a region.

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He, more than most, should have known that not all communists were in favour of Cuban intervention in Latin American affairs, and he was shocked and outraged that the Moscow-oriented Bolivian Party was anything but helpful. As Castro has put the charge against Mario Monje, secretary-general of the Bolivian Communist party, he sabotaged the whole campaign with his "chauvinism and sterile reactionary sentiment"; and Guevara recorded the following:

> *December 31, 1966.*—At 7.30 the doctor arrived with the news that Monje had arrived.... The reception was cordial but tense. The question: "Why are you here?" was in the air. [I told Monje that] I would be the military chief and would not accept ambiguities concerning this. Here the discussion turned into a stalemate and ended up a vicious circle.
>
> *January 31, 1967.*—As was to be expected, Monje's attitude was evasive at first and later on treacherous. The party is now taking up arms against us and I do not know what it will lead to.

But above all he failed, in my opinion, from an overdose of his most characteristic virtue, his all-pervading, devastating singleness of purpose. It was precisely this intransigence of his that blinded him to every consideration, including those of his own survival. Castro said of him in the Sierras that "no one was ever sure that he would take even minimum precautions." He wanted so desperately to realise his "many Viet Nams" that he mistook impractical wishful thinking for hard intelligence. Eight years ago, up there in the Cuban Sierras he had managed to "do the impossible"; in 1966 he believed, because he desperately wanted to believe it, that he could do it again.

Perhaps a less emotional man, a man less single-minded in his dedication than Che Guevara, would have realised that the Cuban Revolution was *sui generis*; that its success had depended on an unprecedented run of good luck and a set of circumstances he should never have expected to find repeated elsewhere. "The isolation," he recorded in his diary in April 1967, "continues to be complete...." As the Bolivian General Ovanda said: "He chose the wrong country, the wrong terrain, and the wrong friends. He was a brave man, but God was not with him...."

YET THE GENERAL'S VERDICT on Che Guevara does little to explain why today millions of young people, not only in the Communist and the underdeveloped world, but also in Europe and the United States, have become his fanatical followers. How, indeed, can anyone account for this phenomenon?

Clearly a large element of the Communist world and the Cuban government in particular, have been anxious to see that this should be so. In his lifetime Guevara was a dynamic, personal force for world revolution: a romantic figure, known and listened to throughout the Communist and Third Force countries where he had travelled so extensively during the years 1960–66. His death, fighting Capitalism and Imperialism was, as Castro himself admitted, "a grievous blow" and, not unnaturally, he hoped by exploiting it to compensate in some measure for the loss. Indeed he set up a committee composed of Guevara's old Sierra comrades to do just that thing, and there is evidence that left-wing organisations the world over—though not in the U.S.S.R.—have followed his lead. A contribution from capitalist business enterprise in the form of fast-selling coloured posters, lapel buttons, and even Guevara hats has completed a public-relations operation as successful with the students in Tokio as it has been with the workers in Dar-es-Salaam.

But this, of course, is only a small part of the story. No amount of artificial inflation of the legend could have produced so large, so flourishing a cult, if the climate in former colonial territories, in minority groups, and amongst youth the world over, were not one of malaise: a malaise born of frustrations, some real, some imagined. The consequent virulent, infectious spirit of revolt against the Establishment is now an uncomfortable fact of everyday life. Young people and young countries everywhere are impatient for violent action *now* as the only means left to them—as they see it—to gain their legitimate rights.

In their frustration and their idealism they have begun to look to Cuba, and specifically to Guevara. Here, for them, is the one remaining hope for a world, rotten with "war and exploitation," once again heading crazily, helplessly down the atomic abyss; and this time with no Kennedy to save it. (In their enthusiasm they forget that it was Guevara who, at the time of the Missile Crisis, declared Cuba should be ready to trigger off the first atomic war rather than surrender the Russian missiles.) They see in Cuba today a young, heroic nation willing to make every sacrifice to build a world where Guevara's "new man," freed from lust for financial gain or power, no longer exploits his fellow creatures. There is, indeed, much to admire in Castro's Cuba, and who, if not the young, should have romantic ideals? But these young disciples are so blinded by the utopianism of the declared aims of that country, that they do not, or will not, see their difficulties; nor do they seem to have their eyes open to the oppressive measures often ruthlessly applied by Government and Party to attain these aims. (On

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Castro's own admission there were 20,000 so-called political prisoners in Cuba in 1965, and there was no available evidence that the number was any less when I revisited the island last year.) So for those who have rallied to Guevara's banner, Cuba is their Utopia and Che is their God. Their belief has the passion of religion and even theology, and it is unlikely to be shaken by conventional, reasonable arguments of Western Establishments, however substantiated they may be.

I wonder what Guevara would have made of his canonisation as patron saint of World Revolution, of Black Power in Africa and in Harlem, and of Student Revolt from Berlin to Berkeley. I always found him a modest man, who shied away from the limelight. He worked conscientiously behind the scenes, while Castro —one of nature's prima donnas, if ever there was one—held the centre of the stage. From what I knew of his temperament, he was perfectly happy to do so. He was also the first to recognise humbug and took much pleasure in debunking it. So I cannot help feeling that he would be either embarrassed or ruefully amused by some aspects of his current apotheosis. He must, of course, have known that his last campaign was a personal and military disaster. But as Napoleon said, "It is the cause—not the death—that makes the martyr," and to fail in your crusade may well be an essential ingredient of effective martyrdom.

The cause Guevara so apocalyptically believed in, and for which he was always ready to die, has, in fact, been well served by his death. In Castro's more colourful language: "Che did not survive his ideas, but he fertilised them with his blood."

H. S. Marchant

What Remains

A Word about Socialism and Christianity — By Ignazio Silone

When people ask where I stand in regard to the Church nowadays, I neither resent the question nor feel that I am under an obligation to answer it. But I do believe that a plain answer might be useful. My friends know very well that I am not a religious bigot or an atheist, but they know too that somewhere under the surface of my native ground, somewhere in the long history of belief and heresy, lie the traces of a Utopia that is very dear to me and that I am still seeking. It is to prevent them from springing to the wrong conclusions that moves me to state my real position as clearly and correctly as I can.

Let me begin by saying that though my position does not represent that of any particular "group," it is in no way a rare or uncommon one. It is based simply on my own personal experience, and may for that very reason be of interest to others. I think, in particular, of those who, like me, after receiving the usual religious education in a clerical school or institution, drew away from the Church in their youth, not because of the natural indifference which comes over most boys after puberty, nor on account of intellectual doubts or dissents about the substance of the faith (such cases are rare), but because they were unable to bear the backwardness, the passivity, or the conventionality of the clergy with regard to the serious decisions which the times imposed upon them. We were between seventeen and twenty years old, an age which, whatever the conventional rhetorical view may be, is the most unhappy period of a man's life and leaves him to struggle for himself as best he can. Throughout that period, I and my contemporaries came face to face with numberless problems of poverty and social disorder, of betrayal, violence, unpunished crime and every kind of corruption—and throughout that period the pastoral letters of the bishops to the faithful deliberately chose as their habitual themes the indecency of women's fashions, promiscuous bathing on the beaches, exotic dancing, the habitual use of dirty words. Such pastoral frivolity on the part of shepherds who had always proclaimed their right to the moral leadership of their flock was scandalous and intolerable. How could one bear to remain in such a Church?

Even if one lived to be as old as Methuselah, one would never forget having lived through this; on the other hand, what point is there in allowing oneself to be chained to a hated past when life is still going on? Nobody can deny that between then and now the Church has moved forward. Who can deny that the Church is the better for it, or not hope that she will continue on her new course? The Council has been an event which will be of value to everyone; even to unbelievers. In the effort the Church has made to bring herself up to date and to

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overcome her own weaknesses, she has shown a spiritual vitality of which many people would not have thought her capable. Can one fail to rejoice? Moreover, some of the Council's boldest discussions produced answers to questions which would never even have been raised in the old days and had driven many of us into a state of complete despair. What can we say to this but better later than never?

BUT STILL, WE HAVE NOT gone back to the fold. Why? I think the reader would be insulting us if he said that our detachment was caused by pride, vanity, or self-interest. We enjoy our share of those weaknesses, no doubt, but not in this particular sphere. Our scepticism towards the Church may be personal, but it is not trivial. It is not based simply on a rebellion that took place long ago; it also involves the consequences of having rebelled—the state of mind in which a man lives once he has broken away from any organised body, clerical or secular. This breach may leave him in a static, half-paralysed state of mind, but if it does not, it will become wider as the years pass, and his reasons for dissent will become greater. Why should this be so? Not necessarily because every renegade may suffer from envy, resentment and anger, but also because every reality looks different when seen from without—away from the disciplinary bond and the plain habit of forming part of a community, which are essential elements in the docile acceptance of a common faith.

I think this has not been sufficiently understood, and I do not mean by it that once a man has "got out," religious dogmas suddenly seem artificial and arbitrary. No, they do not immediately lose their prestige, their fascination, their plausibility; but sooner or later they show themselves to be what they are: the exclusive truths of the Church herself, her spiritual patrimony, that which distinguishes her from other Churches, Christian or otherwise: in a word, her ideology. What had once seemed to be a message from the Father to His children—to all His children—a clear natural light disclosed at birth, a common good, a universal truth, self-evident, irresistible to any faithful mind, changes instead into a complex historical product, the fruit of a particular culture, indeed the amalgam of various cultures, all elaborated over many centuries by a closed community often at war with itself and always in a state of struggle and competition with its rivals. In short, to put it as charitably as possible, a most noble, most venerable superstructure. But what happens to poor Christ Himself within such an edifice?

It is clear that ingenuousness, once lost, cannot easily be recovered, and cannot even be regretted decently. Can one pretend that it is still there to be recaptured, can one, after the experience of seeing it from outside, go back to a pretence of accepting a system of dogmas, in which one no longer recognises an absolute validity? To do so would be not only a defiance of reason, but also a profanation of one's conscience, a lie to oneself and to others, an offence towards God. Nobody can ask this of a man; no promise, no threat, no well-intentioned pressure can impose it on him. But fortunately, Christ is greater than the Church.

I HAVE already suggested that something similar can happen to a man who has left a political party which has a framework similar to that of the Church, a closed society, like that of the Communist Party. Let me apply briefly what I have been saying to this particular political example.

A man who left the Communist Party in the 1930s, because he could not accept the absurd Stalinist theory of Social-Fascism—to say nothing of the notorious corollary which made the destruction of democratic institutions by Nazism a step forward in the proletarian emancipation—did not reject simultaneously the whole residue of Communist theory and practice. On the contrary, he enjoyed the illusion of remaining entirely orthodox. Nevertheless, twenty years later, when the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party condemned Stalinism and some of its most evil aberrations on the grounds of the so-called "cult of personality," he did not consider that he was now obliged to study the whole matter afresh and consider becoming a Communist again. Why? Was the Twentieth Congress not, in its way, an attempt towards modernisation, a step forward? Undoubtedly, but too many years had passed since the renegade had thought of himself as a Communist. Having "got out," and having thus freed himself from the mental influence of a closed society, his original limited rebellion had gradually expanded, until at last it stood in revolt against the whole nineteenth-century, pseudo-scientific framework of Leninism and its totalitarian theory and practice.

It is impossible to declare in the form of a creed or an exact statement what residues of conviction remain to a man who has long since detached himself from a Church or a Party. Speaking for myself, I can only say that in spite of all that has happened I still believe myself to be both a Christian and a Socialist. But I attach no importance to labels. Some people thought some of the Early Christians were atheists merely because they refused to conform to the conventional religious observ-

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ances of their times. If, following the example of such critics, I were to say bluntly what, for instance, I think of the accepted ceremony of laying wreaths on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier (the "Altar of our Country" as we call it) I should run the risk of being accused of undermining the religious spirit of the whole nation.

WHAT IS LEFT is a Christianity without its myth, reduced to its moral essence, plus a great deal of respect and very little nostalgia for what has been lost on the way. To put it shortly but exactly, what is left is the Lord's Prayer. As to the Christian sense of brotherhood and devotion to the poor and humble, this is now translated for me into a fidelity to socialism. I am well aware that this term is now used to cover many strange and contradictory meanings, so I should like to explain that I use it myself in the most traditional sense—that of an economy dedicated to the service of man, and not to the State or to any power of a political sort.

Reflections after the Psychodrama

By Raymond Aron

WHY WERE CIVILISED and intelligent men apparently powerless to resist what I can only call delirium? Why did they suddenly forget the lessons of all the thinkers from Aristotle to Lenin via Machiavelli and Marx, whose works they have read and commented on with such erudition? The explanation varies according to the individual. The chanters of the May revolution thought they had gone further than Marxism; to the extent that they have any ideas, they are reverting to pre-Marxism, to Utopian socialism; they have forgotten a century of history and they have failed to take into account the demands of industry and the economy.

The intellectuals who are most indignant in their condemnation of the consumer society would not themselves forgo the benefits which that society alone makes possible: a decent standard of living for the greatest number, for hundreds of thousands of students. They are no less fervent in their condemnation of inequality and injustice, although they know perfectly well that before the industrial era the national product was distributed even more iniquitously. Not unreasonably, they are angry that the rich countries should be so reticent in contributing to the development of the poor countries. The consumer society becomes a dragon to be slain by those very people who possess the benefits it confers.

Undoubtedly, millions of individuals find no *raison d'être* in their work; neither production nor consumption gives life a meaning. Perhaps the students' protest is, so to speak, metaphysical, directed against a civilisation which, for want of transcendental beliefs, is being swept away in a mad adventure towards more knowledge and more power, with no final aim, and without the discipline of wisdom. If ballistic missiles, thermonuclear bombs, the race to the moon and the arms race are typical of the present phase of history, it is hardly surprising that a section of student youth wavers between "hippie" negation, aspiration towards the violence of salvation and escaping to a new Utopia.

Perhaps the students, coming as they do from a bourgeois background, are expressing a malaise which is affecting the whole of Western civilisation. Perhaps by rejecting all authority these libertarians are inadvertently preparing the way for the ruin of our liberties, by which I mean the ruin of the liberal order, of which the universities, with all their faults, remain the guarantor.

EVERYONE HAS HAD HIS OWN EMOTIONS to contend with during this period. To my knowledge, no one remained calm and lucid during those weeks. As far as I am concerned, it was a painful time for me while I was in the United States, and when I returned to France my strongest feeling was of indignation. It was a greater indignation, however, than any I have ever felt in my life. I admit and confess that I was indignant against what seemed to me unreason. I know of no episode in the history of France which strikes me as so completely irrational. I will try to explain this further, but at the time I was beside myself because of the disproportion between the legitimate grievances against the Gaullist régime, which I dislike,

THESE REMARKS *are excerpted from the conversations recorded by Alain Peyrefitte in Raymond Aron's recently published* La Revolution Introuvable (*Fayard*).

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and the university demands, which I consider legitimate, and this sort of sudden decomposition of French society. No body is directly responsible for this decomposition, but the joy and enthusiasm with which it was greeted by so many of my friends hitherto close to me filled me with an almost physical repulsion which expressed itself by violent and probably excessive statements against one person or another.

The main thing which separates me from those who were very close to me before these events is an affective reaction which I am only too ready to admit; many men of the left, thorough-going anti-Stalinists, relived with joy, enthusiasm and the freshness of youth the climate of the Soviets of 1917, memories of the Paris Commune, or to go back further, the Jacobin Commune. They admired the Sorbonne *graffiti*, they found the young people "generous, fervent, marvellous." Everyone has his own affective reactions; mine were exactly the opposite. Inevitably, in a case like this, we all find our own models, imitate our masters and become actors.

ONE OF THE THINGS which struck me the most was the "talkathon" (*le marathon de palabres*). In Paris and throughout France the students talked and talked and talked for almost five weeks. They will have glowing memories of those conversations. What is more, everyone is flattering them: "They have learnt something, their revolt has given them a sort of maturity." Perhaps. How can an old man presume to tell? I have too much respect for my students to believe that they could be so deficient in moral training. A student from the *Ecole des Sciences Politiques* told me that she had discovered the existence of the workers. Maybe. They have talked to them, and they have derived great happiness from it, which leads me to an idea which all sociological studies confirm: French students, and particularly those in Paris, constitute an isolated mass. Many of them suffer from loneliness and from the absence of community life. Not only do they have no contact with their teachers, who are often remote, but there is also an absence of contact with their fellow students. There are studies to show that some students from the provinces spent years studying at the Sorbonne without really belonging to a particular group or having a circle of friends. This kind of youthful fraternity in a semi-delinquent community is a form of compensation for the solitude in which French students normally live. In the same way most of the plans for reform are directly opposed to, or the very negation of, the realities of France.

France suffers from an over-rigid system and

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Jean-Paul Sartre:

STUDENT POWER: *the words mean nothing until we examine the position of students within the university and in society.*

They are very differently situated from those of us who went to the university 30 or 40 years ago. When I was 20 we were already protesting against the system of imposing courses ex cathedra. *But in those days we were few in number, and, alas, we believed ourselves to be an élite. There were 25 of us at the* Ecole normale—*a distinction—and we had a wonderful library, studies to work in, bedrooms to sleep in and a little pocket-money for our recreation. We considered the books better than the courses, which was true, and our method of demonstrating was simply not to attend the courses. I went to the Sorbonne only once during a whole year, when the law students had decided to boycott the lectures of a professor whose ideas displeased them. All the* Normaliens, *who ordinarily never entered the place, were to be found there on that particular day.*

We were not stifled because there were so few of us. We worked with perfect equipment, by ourselves. I prepared my agrégation *with Nizan, Maheu (now in UNESCO), Aron and Simone de Beauvoir. We could always talk to the professors of the school, and* contestation *was a permanent state, but it all went on in an atmosphere of aristocratic leisure.*

TODAY THINGS HAVE *changed entirely. Students have become so numerous that they can no longer have the direct contact with the professsors that we had—and even then it was difficult. Many students nowadays never even see their professor. They listen to lectures over a loud-speaker, delivered by an inhuman and inaccessible being of whom it is impossible to believe that he takes the slightest interest in them. The faculty professor is nearly always—as he was in my day—a gentleman who has written a thesis which he goes on repeating for the rest of his life. He possesses a power to which he is furiously attached: that of imposing his ideas, in the name of his accumulated knowledge, upon an audience that is not entitled to dispute them. But knowledge that is not constantly under fire, constantly enriched and reaffirmed in the light of criticism, has no value....*

What is knowledge? It is always something which is not what one thought, which is never absolute because it is constantly superseded by new observations or new experiments carried out by new methods or with better instruments. And the new discoveries will in their turn be disputed by other experts, some backward, others more advanced. That is how it always happens. Einstein's theory was based on his study of the Michelson and Morley experiments, which contradicted the postulates of Newtonian physics. The Theory of Relativity emerged, itself to be disputed thirty years later.

But, it will be argued, students cannot usefully criticise the teaching of a professor since, by definition, they do not yet know anything. The first answer to this is that the person who knows nothing always knows a little more than he thinks—like the slave who was persuaded by Socrates to rediscover a mathematical theorem. And above all culture can only be transmitted if at all times people are in a position to dispute it.

In this matter I have myself had two significant experiences. When I was teaching in the lycée *at Laon my pupils were the sons of well-to-do farmers and dealers to whom a sou was a sou, a table a table, and a bull a bull. There could be no question of ridding them of this hard-headed good sense. I decided that the only thing to do was to shake them up a little, and I started the year with the philosophy of Kant. They resisted ferociously. The notion that so-called exterior reality is shaped by our own internal unity of experience was to them intolerable. But after a month of argument they said, "We see what you mean," and for the rest of the year my life was a misery because whatever I tried to explain to them they brought up Kant. They had assimilated him so well that they could never get away from him.*

On the other hand, I later delivered a series of formal lectures at the Lycée Pasteur *in Paris. The pupils did not argue at all. The universe might be an exterior reality or a linked series of impressions; children might desire their father or their mother—and so what? It was all the same to them. The newspapers and the radio had given them a veneer of false culture. They disputed nothing, and at the end of the year they knew nothing. The only way to learn is to dispute, and that is also the only way to grow up. A man is nothing if he is not a contester. Yet he must also remain faithful to something. For me the definition of an intellectual is this: someone who is loyal to a particular political and social scheme of things but who never ceases to question it. Of course there is a contradiction between the loyalty and the questioning, but that is a good and fruitful thing. Loyalty without contest will not do. One is no longer a free man.*

THE PURPOSE OF A UNIVERSITY *is to make men into contestants. That is to say, a man of 45 should know that the ideas he has formed, after disputing the ideas of those who taught and helped him, will in five years' time be disputed in their turn by those he has taught, who will say to him, "It's not like that any more." This is the first sign of age, and it generally comes between 35 and 45. But if he has learnt, after having his say, to debate it with others, then he may somewhat prolong his mature, useful life.*

But we still have in our universities those absurd ivory towers, the ex cathedra *series of lectures, delivered by gentlemen who never debate anything.*

Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre in
LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR *(Paris)*

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an over-authoritarian hierarchy. Why do people look back with delight on periods of great confusion? In those periods when the system collapses they experience an illusion of fraternity and equality which seems real, and then they proceed to rebuild the rigid hierarchical structure which imprisons them. Ever since 1789, the French have magnified their revolutions in retrospect; they have looked back on them as huge festivals in which they had everything which is missing from their lives in normal times; they feel that they are fulfilling their aspirations, even if in a waking dream. A revolution of this sort must be destructive; it is accompanied by extravagant projects amounting to a Utopian negation of reality. For example, the students want to be their own examiners. No one seriously believes in the idea, but it is a way of getting rid of a system which has a traumatic effect on them: examination by an anonymous personality with categorical, impenetrable standards.

If the examination system is modified tomorrow, I shall be in favour, as I have been for the last 15 years, but at a time when everyone is being so unreasonable it is important that someone should have the courage to point out unpopular facts. The student community, the *grand défoulement* and these endless talking sessions are typical of French society; they provide a temporary and quickly fading satisfaction of needs which real society fails to cater for. Of course, for a phenomenon of this order to occur in the first place, there must necessarily have been deep underlying causes. But these underlying causes belong to the affective, emotional order. Instead of taking seriously what the actors say, we must understand what they feel. The methods of interpretation which can best be applied to the recent crisis are those generally considered unsatisfactory: *La Psychologie des Foules*, by Le Bon, or the interpretation of the residues, beloved of Pareto. At a time of collective dementia, we look for the causes instead of discussing the pseudo-intellectual content of the delirium.

No one can understand what was written during May and June, by many writers whose intelligence I respect, without remembering that the men of the Left, deprived of their Utopia since Stalinism, thought they had rediscovered what they had always dreamed of, a libertarian revolution, a revolution which would not lead to tyranny and brutality. They relived 1917 and the Commune, and were deeply hurt by my scepticism and cynicism. And yet how can a society be built on pre-Marxist socialism, on a mixture of anarcho-syndicalism and Proudhonism? I am quite willing for the aesthetes, including those who live on the Avenue Foch, to

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come and admire the Sorbonne and take part in the debates of the young people, but this carnival has nothing to do with the construction of a new society and a new order, even in the university.

I do not use the term "*psychodrame*" without modification. But nevertheless, we have all been acting a part during this period. I took on the role of de Tocqueville; this has its ridiculous side, but others were playing Saint-Just, Robespierre or Lenin, which all in all was even more ridiculous.

ONE OF THE LESSONS which I think can be learnt from these events is that modern societies are more fragile than we suppose. The university is an especially fragile institution. And, I repeat, if I have spoken and written so strongly, it is because these young people and many of my colleagues are destroying a precious institution by shaking its moral foundations. The sole moral foundation of the university is reciprocal tolerance on the part of teachers and voluntary discipline on the part of students. Higher education will cease to exist if the students are to use the university as a base for political action. Such an outcome would amount to the Latin-Americanisation of the French universities and the ruin of the universities. Whatever the part played by the students in the running of the university and especially if this part is eventually a large one, voluntary discipline on the part of students will become an indispensable condition for the survival of the universities.

A colleague writes that whoever takes up a position against this revolution can no longer claim that he is in favour of reforms. I would reply calmly but firmly that the opposite is true. The university cannot be reformed in any worthwhile way without the restoration of its moral foundation. I am afraid that it will take many years to reach this state; perhaps we ought to create other universities, perhaps those of yesterday are dead. We are aware of the fragility of the university institution, and that is why I immediately declared myself against violent movements and against the *enragés*, whether young or old. If the aim of the *enragés* is to destroy the university and society, then they are using the right methods; but if they are simply seeking to reform the university they are wrong, because for a fairly long time to come, perhaps, they have made the life of the liberal university virtually impossible.

Everywhere during these past few years we have seen scattered occurrences of violence, riots, revolts of youth, insecurity in the cities of the United States. In literature, in philosophy and the cinema, a new form of the absurd has flourished, which instead of finding an outlet in the pro-Soviet attitude of Sartre in the 'fifties, or the moralism of Camus in the 'fifties, has found its outlet in Guevarism, the guerrilla expression of the virile, revolutionary attitude.

I FIND myself in some difficulty when it comes to talking of my intellectual colleagues, because I inspire in them such violently hostile feelings that I am tempted to imitate some of them and proceed to settle accounts.

The first time I was, as it were, in quarantine as far as the right-thinking intelligentsia is concerned, that is, the left wing, was between 1946–47 and 1955–56, during the great debate on pro-communism (or pro-Soviet attitudes) and pro-Atlanticism. I was released from quarantine not by persuading anybody but thanks to Khrushchev's speech. Perhaps if I had known in 1955 that Khrushchev was going to make that speech in 1956 about the crimes of Stalinism, I would have not found it necessary to write *L'Opium des Intellectuels*. I think, after the event, that I devoted too much time to controversies whose scientific importance seemed weak, and the political effectiveness thereof also weak. Let me say once and for all, men, and especially intellectuals, believe what they want to believe (and that goes for me too probably), and in the final analysis are unmoved by argument.

I am not reproached, according to friends of mine who mix in all groups, with being hostile to the revolution within the university. There are many who take this for granted, despite the criticisms which I used to make of the traditional university. They realise with irony or indifference that I was bound to react as I did. Perhaps my reaction was a little more emotional than they expected from me, but after all emotion was something which everyone had in common in May and June. What really alienated a number of moderates who more or less followed the revolution was the contempt which they thought I showed for the events of May. What exasperated them so was my failure to take the students, teachers, intellectuals and all the actors in the revolutionary comedy seriously enough. What came between me and many of my friends or ex-friends who really agree with most of my judgments is the fact that I talk about carnival and masquerade and manifest more scepticism than admiration. I refuse to salute this "*admirable jeunesse*." Too many adults have already done so. Barricades which are symbolically effective seem to me to constitute neither an intellectual exploit nor a moral one. If the young people want to retain glowing memories of the barricades, let them do so. Why should old people pretend to feelings they do not have? If young people criticise the

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brutality of the *CRS* and at the same time profess the cult of violence, that seems to me like good subversive tactics, nothing more, nothing less. As for the men of my generation or the one after, they do not like to think that they were swept away by what I persist in calling collective delirium. They will not admit to having lost control of themselves, or to having lost their reason for a few weeks or a few days. I admit that I came near to losing my reason myself for two days, after the refusal of the agreements of Grenelle by Billancourt and before General de Gaulle's speech. I did wonder whether the President of the Republic had lost control of the situation and whether the régime, based on the magic of one man, was going to collapse as soon as the magic faded away. Many university teachers and intellectuals would have it that the May revolution was a great date in history. Indeed, even Malraux believes it since he talks of "the end of a world."

I would not presume to prophesy: perhaps a civilisation without religion, whose Church questions and sometimes denies itself, a civilisation without patriotic and traditional values, really is entering the final phase before death. A society based on the voluntary co-operation of millions of individuals within rationalised organisations is almost paralysed by the violence of minorities and the disaffection of a great number. Perhaps tomorrow the events of May will be seen as the outward and visible sign of the basic precariousness of a liberal order in a scientific civilisation. I do not claim that the admirers of the May revolution are wrong. Perhaps the future will justify them and historians will see in what I think is a comedy the surfacing of underground destructive forces.

GIVEN ALL THAT, the fact remains that these revolutionaries who dream of direct democracy in an industrial society are on the wrong track. Events as they unfolded bore no relation to grievances against the government. The course of events in May resembles the crisis of 1848, except that it is more absurd, and I claim the right to be no less severe with regard to the events of May 1968 than the socialist Proudhon, the liberal Tocqueville and Karl Marx were with regard to the imitators of the great revolution of the comedians of 1848. Why should we admire these pseudo-Jacobin clubs where pseudo-revolutionaries discuss pseudo-reforms in interminable sessions. What is admirable in the sight of professors of constitutional law violating legality and finding pseudo-justifications for pseudo-revolutionary structures and pseudo-innovatory constitutions which are not likely to function? I refuse to accept that these Byzantine intellectuals who express themselves in a

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style incomprehensible to the ordinary mortal and set themselves up as leaders of the revolution of the middle of the twentieth century are the interpreters of the people or the proletariat or even of the students. Nothing can prevent me from seeing the conquest of the Hotel Massa by progressive writers and the revolution at the Cannes festival by successful film producers as typical of a history which is rich in absurd episodes. These two episodes seem to me characteristic of a certain Parisian intelligentsia which mixes *byzantisme*, money, Castroism and Maoism. In 1961 I found revolutionary Cuba fairly ineffective, but I was on the whole sympathetic to this sugar island; the Cuban people probably are better off under Fidel than they were under the previous régime. I do not think that the Cuban revolution marks a great event in universal history, and in any case this sort of revolution has nothing to do with France. As for the Chinese revolution, like all those who talk about it or don't talk about it, I know very little about it, and the idea of transporting to the Sorbonne the idea which we have of it seems to me worthy of the Parisian intellectuals: perfectly unreasonable, and capable of leading to consequences which could be disastrous. True, I shall continue to be despised by important intellectuals and some less important ones for failing to play the game, for not courting popularity by flattering youth and for not sacrificing to the fashionable ideas. I will continue to see in the May events one of the sadder periods in the history of France, from which no one has emerged a better person and of which no one has anything to be proud.

PERHAPS I ATTACH more importance to the intelligentsia than they deserve. Perhaps France will continue to offer the paradox of a conservative people and revolutionary intellectuals. The former will find in the verbalising of the revolutionaries a compensation for their conservatism, and in turn the revolutionaries will learn the secret of how to despise their compatriots in comfort. I am not sure which is worse.

Anthony Crosland:

NO GENERAL *diagnosis of the student revolt is possible. We cannot assimilate events in different countries to a single cause, or give equal moral significance to the riots in the Philippines and in Czechoslovakia, at the Frankfurt book fair or in Madrid.*

In some of its aspects, the student revolt evokes our sympathy: in its general irreverence towards established authority; in its rebellion against obsolete or paternalist systems as in some of our arts colleges or at the French universities; and, on a higher moral plane altogether, where the students are one aspect—or even the spearhead—of popular revolt against domestic or foreign tyranny, as in the case of Czechoslovakia or Spain.

But it does not evoke sympathy if it, in turn, manifests itself in intolerant and authoritarian "paternalism," for instance in a rejection of "the consumer society," regardless of whether or not this is what most people want, and still less if in a democratic society it manifests itself in violence. As we see in France and the U.S. this invariably produces a more powerful counter-violence.

Indeed, except where violence is the only way of establishing democracy, it is always a weapon against democracy, reflecting a contempt for free speech and the rights of the majority.

That is why I find rather nauseating the drawing-room or vicarious flirtation with the idea of violence which occasionally emanates from Great Turnstile or the Orkneys and Shetlands. I think of Pasternak's Dr. Zhivago:

"Men like Pamphil, who needed no encouragement to hate intellectuals, officers and gentry with a savage hatred, were regarded by enthusiastic left-wing intellectuals as a rare find, and were greatly valued. Their inhumanity seemed a marvel of class consciousness, their barbarism a model of proletarian firmness and revolutionary instinct."

Another disturbing facet in the creed of the New Left is the revolt against institutions—the belief that they and the State should wither away. Institutions do become ossified and need to be reformed or replaced, but this does not mean we can do without them, and their attendant bureaucracy, rules, clerks and computers.

Our civilisation is in serious danger of destruction within the next twenty years from the three great threats of population explosion, the spread of nuclear weapons and the pollution of the atmosphere. All three have one thing in common: they need, if they are to be held in check, increasing social and institutional control.

That is why simple anarchism or utopianism has never been less appropriate or more dangerous than today and why there has never been a greater need for systematic radical analysis.

C. A. R. Crosland *at a* Socialist Commentary *meeting during the recent Labour Party Conference in Blackpool.*

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Orwell & the Intelligentsia

By John Wain

IT IS COMING UP to twenty years since the death of George Orwell, and already the signs are that he is generally accepted as a classic of English literature, whose best books—and even the best passages from his less successful books—will live as long as the language.

This alone would make it important to rescue every stray scrap of his writing and present it in chronological order, so that, whichever of his major writings we happen to be studying in detail, we can see at a glance what kind of underbrush surrounded it. But there is another reason why a complete Orwell is important to us, and that is his contemporaneity, his relevance to our own day-to-day situation. If he had had a normal life-span he would be still working away in full vigour. Whether or not he would have been as closely engaged with the contemporary scene, it is impossible to guess, for all his life he hankered to get away from journalism, away from immediate involvement with political and social issues, and produce at least one big book that would be not a tract for the times but a pure work of literature; and he had already taken the all-important first step to this by retiring to Jura before illness struck him down. But even if Orwell had given up journalism, or limited himself to the occasional pronouncement, one thing is clear: the task he set himself is still there to be done. The situation that faces us (and by "us" I mean the citizens of liberal democratic countries, who each day have to decide afresh whether we want to go on being such) is still the same one that faced Orwell during his mature life, that is from 1933 to his death in early 1950.

More of that in a moment. One's first duty is to try to describe the collection[1] that provokes these thoughts. It is a remarkable labour of love, a handsome tribute from the editors and their publisher. I said harsh things, once, in these pages about Secker & Warburg's unsatisfactory *Collected Essays of George Orwell* (1961), which not only failed to add any new material to that already in print, but even contrived to leave some of it out. So let me say what a pleasure it is to welcome these four handsome, clearly-printed, scrupulously-edited volumes. Even the price—given the fantastic overhead costs of publishing in the 1960s—is very reasonable for what must be something like a thousand pages of matter, most of it virtually inaccessible since its first appearance. And it is a pleasure, too, to pay tribute to the courage with which the firm of Secker & Warburg took on Orwell in the shivering days of the late 1930s, when the much more powerful firm of Gollancz had dropped him as a political hot potato because of *Homage to Catalonia*.[2]

Briefly, the plan of this collection is as follows. It reprints all Orwell's writings, except those that exist as books in their own right and are available separately, *i.e.*, the novels and the three books of reportage. With that exception, everything is here that the editors could find: book reviews, miscellaneous journalism, scraps of reporting, rough drafts and notes that did not get into print, Letters-to-the-Editor, wartime journals, the lot. Everything is in chronological order, and the separate books are listed in their right place with dates of the first editions in England and America. In addition, Mr. Angus has added two very useful appendices: a brief list of Orwell's writings (a more elaborate bibliography is in process of being assembled by two other specialists) and a "chronology" that sorts out the main dates and events of Orwell's life.

[1] *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell.* Four volumes. Edited by SONIA ORWELL and IAN ANGUS. London, Secker & Warburg. £10. New York, Harcourt, Brace & World, $34.80.

[2] See Orwell's letter of 31 July 1937. "Gollancz is of course part of the Communism-racket, and as soon as he heard I had been associated with the POUM and Anarchists and had seen the inside of the May riots in Barcelona, he said he did not think he would be able to publish my book, though not a word of it was written yet" (I, 279).

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The editing seems to me exceptionally well done. Everything that needs a footnote is given one, and the text is very tidy. Naturally, in such a vast compilation, a few errors will slip in, and here, offered in a spirit of co-operation, are the ones I noticed. In III, 281, John Masefield is given a knighthood, which he didn't have, and in III, 180, some lines by Humbert Wolfe are ascribed to Hilaire Belloc. The North Staffordshire village of Endon is called "Eldon" (I, 171), though I don't know whether this is a misprint or whether Orwell simply misheard the name of this little place which he once passed through on foot, *en route* for Wigan and the coal-mines. That is the sum total of the errors I found in all these thousand pages! It takes some beating, even if every reader finds two or three more.

NATURALLY, THE RELEASE OF a large bulk of previously uncollected material is bound to cause some nervousness to those of us who have already put our general interpretation and assessment of Orwell's work on record. With this new material in front of us, is there anything in our earlier estimate that needs to be corrected? Speaking for myself, I feel inclined to withdraw my remark, made in an essay first published in ENCOUNTER in 1962 and later collected in a volume, that Orwell was too hard on the intelligentsia, that his constant accusation against them of power-worship was "nagging" and sprang from "an emotional attitude." Confronted with Orwell's judgment that

> It would be grossly unfair to suggest that power-worship is the only motive for Russophile feeling, but it is one motive, and among intellectuals it is probably the strongest one. . . .

I entered a respectful protest:

> Considering how much "intellectuals" have done to fight régimes based on cruelty and power, how many of them have died under torture in the last thirty years because they refused to get into line with "power-worship," this seems a particularly uncalled-for judgment.

Since then, having lived for a few more years in this vale of tears, and now having the opportunity to read some of the controversies which implanted this opinion in Orwell, I feel, sadly, that he was more right than I. One doesn't, of course, reduce this kind of thing to a matter of arithmetic, but the number of "intellectuals" who have risked their skins, or put themselves to the slighest inconvenience, financial or otherwise, in order to resist power and oppression must be balanced against the large (larger?) number of them who have made very comfortable bargains with it of one kind and another. Certainly, if the political and social attitudes of

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some of my fellow-writers—the sort of thing they feel called upon to say and, still more significantly, the sort of thing they feel called upon to shut up about—are not dictated by "power-worship," it is hard to see what they are dictated by.

ORWELL'S intellectual history, looked at from one angle, is a diagram of a particular classic kind of political disillusionment. He went more or less straight from Eton to the Burmese branch of the Indian Imperial Police and stayed with them for nearly five years, at a formative time when one year is the equivalent of at least three in later life. This meant that his early experience of his fellow-countrymen must have been exclusively with (*1*) schoolmasters, (*2*) blimps. Both these groups, and especially the second, must have been made up chiefly of the type who "read *Blackwood's* and publicly thanked God [he was] 'not brainy'." Such a prolonged exposure to the anti-intelligentsia must have given Orwell a predisposition to admire literary, artistic, and clever people generally. In particular, he evidently made the very natural assumption that the intelligentsia, not being directly interested in money or high office, would be against tyranny and sympathetic to the idea of human equality and justice. We all start out with this kind of idea, and it is the more painful to discover, when one comes up against them in increasing numbers, that many "intellectuals" are in fact natural authoritarians who see no reason at all why people—other people, that is—should have freedom of speech or action. The besetting sin of the "intellectual" is his tendency to look down on the ordinary man, to assume that the ordinary man's solution to human problems cannot possibly work because it has been arrived at without his help and without using any of the specialised techniques that he has so painstakingly acquired. He comes into any human situation like a grown-up entering a disordered nursery, ordering the children to tidy up their toys and line up for their spoonful of medicine. Since the grown-up has a natural right to order the children about, being older and wiser, it follows (on this view) that the cool-headed managing "intellectual" has a right to line himself up with the secret police and all the other machinery of modern coercion; all this then balloons more and more wildly until we reach the situation where the Right-wing intelligentsia can see nothing wrong with Mussolini and Hitler and the Left-wing intelligentsia can see nothing wrong with Stalin; in either case, all they can see is that the children are being kept in order instead of being allowed to mess up the nursery.

The objection to this view is that ordinary non-intellectual human beings are not children; or, if they are, they are no more childish in their attitudes than politicians, managers, and "intellectuals." Hence the opposition to such people will always start at grass-root level, with an affirmation of the value of our ordinary, shared humanity. And a conviction of this value is precisely what one finds lacking in so many of the "intellectuals" who, with undoubted achievements to their credit in one sphere or another, issue from their laboratories or their studies or their deaneries and begin putting the world to rights with the aid of the NKVD. In doing so they are obeying two impulses: one, to tidy up the mess; two, to enjoy the sense of ordering people about, exercising their authority and generally being top-dog. (One sees this in a very naked form in those ladies of *haute bourgeoise* or aristocratic families who become totalitarians of one kind or another: the impulse to interfere with people's lives, to force soup and tracts on them, combined with a heart of stone.)

WHEN WE ARE YOUNG, especially if we are growing up in Philistine surroundings (and it isn't necessary to join the Imperial Police in order to do *that*), it is natural to imagine that when we finally get into contact with our own kind, with writers, scientists, "intellectuals," we shall find them champions of humanity, full of unselfish love of their fellow-men. Then we do get into contact with them, and the douche of cold water comes more or less immediately. Power of one kind and another is so important in the centralised modern world, which has fewer and fewer neglected corners where a man can live a decent quiet life, that the fear of it, the wish to placate it, the masochistic love of it, the outright lust for it, run all the way through society, from the industrial worker who would rather be an assembly-line hand at a big factory than do more skilled and self-fulfilling work at a small one, to the scientist who will make a bargain with any set of murderers who will give him funds and tell him how important his work is. The big factory makes the worker feel safe, which is exactly what the big movement, whether it is a political party or an ideological vogue, does for the "intellectual."

Tyranny, we imagine in the springtime of our days, is so hideous a force that all men except the criminal and the sub-normal will naturally combine against it. Alas, the attractive power of tyranny is just as great as its repulsive power. To come back to Orwell, if one follows the history of his mind in detail, as it is now possible to do without getting out of one's armchair, one sees this realisation sinking in from month to month, from the Spanish experi-

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ence through the days of the Russo-German Pact to the first year or two of the war. In March-April 1942, writing a "London Letter" to the *Partisan Review*, he noted sombrely:

> The quisling intellectual is a phenomenon of the last two years. Previously we all used to assume that Fascism was so self-evidently horrible that no thinking person would have anything to do with it, and also that the Fascists always wiped out the intelligentsia when they had the opportunity. Neither assumption was true, as we can see from what happened in France. Both Vichy and the Germans have found it quite easy to keep a façade of "French culture" in existence. Plenty of intellectuals were ready to go over, and the Germans were quite ready to make use of them, even when they were "decadent." At this moment Drieu la Rochelle is editing the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, Pound is bellowing against the Jews on the Rome radio, and Céline is a valued exhibit in Paris, or at least his books are.... If the Germans got to England, similar things would happen, and I think I could make out at least a preliminary list of the people who would go over.

This statement gives us a perspective in which to see all the controversies in which Orwell was enmeshed year after year, from the struggle to get his views on the Spanish war into print, through the war-time argufying with various defeatist groups, to the wrestle in the last five years of his life against the various people in important positions who were censors in all but name, like the man who said that it would be all right for *Animal Farm* to be published if Orwell would choose some kind of animal other than pigs to represent the Russian rulers. The line taken by such people was always that nothing was actually *prohibited*—God forbid, in England, the home of liberty and free speech! —but to say certain things might be "premature" or worsen a situation which, in official judgment, was delicate. On which Orwell's comment was: "Circus dogs jump when the trainer cracks his whip, but the really well-trained dog is the one that turns his somersault when there is no whip."

WITH THIS KIND OF THING in mind, I think it necessary to withdraw the caveat that Orwell is unfair to the intelligentsia. No doubt it could be shown that he is a little hard on them, in some of his sweeping statements about "intellectuals." But it was, so to speak, his function to be hard on them. He had undertaken the task of keeping their consciences alive. For this task he was uniquely fitted, being able to observe the intelligentsia both from the inside and the outside. From the inside, because of his standing as a writer; from the outside, because his own life-

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style was that of the common man, the non-intellectual who finds himself pushed around and has his life planned for him by other people. Nor was this life-style, as is so persistently hinted, a matter of affectation. From letters, from stray items in the "As I Please" column, and of course from the abundant evidence of the novels, it is clear that Orwell genuinely did find simple pleasures the most attractive. He enjoyed digging his garden, strolling about in the countryside, drinking beer at the local pub, reading a book by a good coal fire. A piece like "The Moon Under Water," describing the ideal pub that turns out to exist only in his imagination, is as good a guide as any to his inner vision of happiness.

> To begin with, its whole architecture and fittings are uncompromisingly Victorian. It has no glass-topped tables or other modern miseries, and, on the other hand, no sham roof-beams, ingle-nooks or plastic panels masquerading as oak. The grained woodwork, the ornamental mirrors behind the bar, the cast-iron fire-places, the florid ceiling stained dark yellow by tobacco-smoke, the stuffed bull's head over the mantelpiece—everything has the solid comfortable ugliness of the nineteenth century.
>
> In winter there is generally a good fire burning in at least two of the bars, and the Victorian lay-out of the place gives one plenty of elbow-room. There are a public bar, a saloon bar, a ladies' bar, a bottle-and-jug for those who are too bashful to buy their supper beer publicly, and upstairs, a dining-room.
>
> Games are only played in the public, so that in the other bars you can walk about without constantly ducking to avoid flying darts.
>
> In "The Moon Under Water" it is always quiet enough to talk. The house possesses neither a radio nor a piano, and even on Christmas Eve and such occasions the singing that happens is of a decorous kind.

And so it goes on—the middle-aged barmaids who know their customers by name, the garden with chairs and tables and a chute for the children, the china mugs out of which "beer tastes better," the draught stout you can have with your lunch. It sounds like perfection. It also sounds like the sort of place no *New Statesman* intellectual would be seen dead in, or would go in only to patronise it and draw disadvantageous comparisons with the Continental *bistro*. "The solid comfortable ugliness of the 19th century"—Orwell enjoyed this unfashionable taste unself-consciously, without being defiant about it and without making it into a programme *à la* Betjeman.

Orwell's fondness for a good pub where "it is always quiet enough to talk" reminds one rather of Samuel Johnson's verdict that "a tavern chair" was "the throne of human felicity," and again that "There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man, by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn." Indeed it is rather surprising to find that, in the various pieces of literary criticism collected here, there is no mention of Johnson, whom Orwell must have known at any rate through Boswell. It is true that most of his 18th-century reading was in fiction; the essay on Swift is well known, and there is a (to my mind) even more perceptive article on Smollett ("Scotland's Best Novelist," III, 244–248) and an affectionate tribute to *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Obviously, it was one of Orwell's pleasures to spend a few hours in the 18th century now and then. He liked its directness; 18th-century people were tough and coarse, but they were willing to make a few basic assumptions about life and then act openly on those assumptions. It had not yet become difficult for the left hand to know what the right hand was doing. Orwell would have fitted straight into the 18th century; even his prose style could be passed off as 18th century with very little trimming. It is not periwigged, but then a lot of 18th-century prose is not periwigged either. There is a direct, conversational tone which such writers as Swift and Defoe carry on from Bunyan, and Orwell belongs to this tradition very exactly.

IN HIS GENERAL POSITION, however, the 18th-century figure with whom Orwell has most affinity is probably Samuel Johnson. Of course certain things are missing from the parallel; Orwell is without the whole scholarly-antiquarian side of Johnson's mind, for one thing. But consider the resemblances. Both men spent their mature years chiefly in the company of people from whom they felt themselves to be marked off by certain differences in background and attitude. Johnson's friends were mostly either scholars, church dignitaries, important political figures like Burke, great figures in the arts like Reynolds and Garrick, or—on the other hand—young men of good family like Beauclerk, Langton, and Boswell. With his provincial roots and his background of poverty, Johnson did not feel himself to be cast in the same mould as these people, and his celebrated sharpness in seeing through their various kinds of "cant" derives in part from this. Similarly with Orwell, who, as we have seen, spent most of his earlier manhood among colonial functionaries or, back at home, the very poor. It was not until the 1940s that he seems to have found himself mixing chiefly with the big-city intelligentsia, and then, like

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Johnson, he was in an excellent position to offer the recurrent advice: "My dear sir, clear your mind of cant."

The same applies to their political attitudes. Johnson was a Tory, and throughout most of his life the Tories were very remote from power. But he did not imagine that this obliged him to spend a lifetime shouting abuse at the Whigs and crediting the dispossessed Tories with impossible virtues. It amused him to use the word "Whig" as a synonym for "rascal," yet when Whig statesmen took a line that happened to fit in with his own convictions, he was ready to support them (*e.g.*, in the attempt to tax the American settlers). His great contribution to Toryism was that he was an unshaken Tory who was at the same time utterly different from the obedient party hack, ready to lie and equivocate for his own side and to keep inconvenient facts out of sight. Is this not exactly Orwell's position *vis-à-vis* the Left in the 1930s and '40s? "I belong to the Left, and must work inside it," he wrote to the Duchess of Atholl, explaining why he found it impossible to join something called the League for European Freedom (IV, 30); but his way of "working inside" the Left was at any time apt to produce the sort of embarrassment that one can see in, say, the preface that Victor Gollancz found it necessary to write for *The Road to Wigan Pier*.

Orwell's main task, like Johnson's, was to challenge people to "think their thoughts down to the roots," as he once put it. Hence his running warfare with the kind of "intellectual" who would rather half-think twenty thoughts than think one right out. This is why, during the '40s, Orwell found it necessary to keep banging away at certain points that dominant "progressive" opinion simply would not face: such as that if you are not prepared for people to die in war, you must be ready for them to be killed in some other way; or that, since the British Empire was a system for exploiting cheap coloured labour, the true "proletariat" of England had dark skins and lived thousands of miles away; or that people who enjoy feeling holy are usually living in safety and comfort because of the distinctly un-holy actions committed on their behalf, "like Huxley advocating non-violence behind the guns of the American navy."

But most deeply of all, at the bedrock level, both Orwell and Johnson had the same fundamental approach to human life. They both resisted any form of superficial optimism, any idea that a few wipes with a damp sponge could clean the slate and humanity could start again, freed from the burden of guilt and error.

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Johnson accepted the Christian doctrine of original sin, but Orwell, without this theological underpinning, had something of the same attitude on a mundane, historical level. "We have all touched pitch.... We do not have the chance, in a time like this, to say 'Tomorrow we can all start being good.'" In a moment, I shall quote the longer passage from which those sentences of Orwell's are taken. What he was combating was the notion that individuals or groups here and there, by adopting hygienic and superior moral attitudes, could somehow keep their hands clean while everyone else's were dirty. Human life, as he saw it, was more of a piece than that; we were all in it together. To declare that the world situation was hopeless, that the only thing left was to retire into a corner and see to it that there, at any rate, sanity and benevolence would prevail, was merely to choose another kind of acquiescence in wickedness. During World War II, for instance, many English pacifists claimed that Hitler could only be opposed by a force similar to himself, that to beat down Nazism it would be necessary for us to become Nazis, and that, therefore, no difference existed between the two sides and the best thing would be to drop all resistance and fight against force and terror by the power of love. This claim arose, in Orwell's view, from people's unwillingness to "think their thoughts down to the roots"—the roots, in this case, being (1) a conviction that high-mindedness will always be suitably rewarded and (2) a comfortable indifference to large-scale human suffering, leading to the assumption that it would be better not to try to rescue the people who were in the clutch of the Nazis. Orwell demolished this position a number of times—without effect, of course, on the minds of those entrenched within it—and it is worth quoting one of these demolitions, if only because so much of present-day radicalism, particularly of the youthful student-protest-and-hippy variety, makes the same assumption. Once again one hears talk of the futility of armaments and the efficacy of resisting cruelty and oppression by "love," though I notice that not many people in Czechoslovakia tried to kiss the Red Army. Only the other day, there was a commemoration ceremony at Belsen or Dachau or some similar place of ultimate horror, a ceremony designed to express pity for the victims and shame that *homo sapiens* could do such things; and the inevitable youths and girls turned up with a demonstration "against militarism." In view of the fact that places like Dachau and Belsen were only thrown open, and the survivors rescued, because men were willing to join armies, to drive tanks and to fire guns, it seemed a slightly less than tactful moment to come out against "militarism." A concentration camp, if anywhere, is a good place to recall the fact that *some* positive things have been achieved by the willingness of soldiers to fight. And now back to 1941, and let Orwell speak for a moment. He is taking off from a review of a pacifist propaganda-novel:

> The notion that you can somehow defeat violence by submitting to it is simply a flight from fact. As I have said, it is only possible to people who have money and guns between themselves and reality. But why should they want to make this flight, in any case? Because, rightly hating violence, they do not wish to recognise that it is integral to modern society and that their own fine feelings and noble attitudes are all the fruit of injustice backed up by force. They do not want to learn where their incomes come from. Underneath this lies the hard fact, so difficult for many people to face, that individual salvation is not possible, that the choice before human beings is not, as a rule, between good and evil but between two evils. You can let the Nazis rule the world; that is evil; or you can overthrow them by war, which is also evil. There is no other choice before you, and whichever you choose you will not come out with clean hands. It seems to me that the text for our time is not "Woe to him through whom the evil cometh" but the one from which I took the title of this article, "There is not one that is righteous, no, not one." We have all touched pitch, we are all perishing by the sword. We do not have the chance, in a time like this, to say "Tomorrow we can all start being good." That is moonshine. We only have the chance of choosing the lesser evil and of working for the establishment of a new kind of society in which common decency will again be possible. There is no such thing as neutrality in this war. The whole population of the world is involved in it, from the Eskimos to the Andamanese, and since one must inevitably help one side or the other, it is better to know what one is doing and count the cost.

BEYOND ALL THIS, another question arises. Was it not a tragic waste for Orwell, a major writer, to be involved year after year in this kind of argufying? The regular column in *Tribune*, the series of "London Letters" to the *Partisan Review*, the book reviews, the bits of pure pot-boiling journalism like his piece in the *Evening Standard* detailing the eleven golden rules for making a good cup of tea (III, 40–43) —in which last, incidentally, he joins hands again with Johnson, "a hardened and shameless Tea-drinker ... who with Tea amuses the evening, with Tea solaces the midnight, and with Tea welcomes the morning." Was Orwell

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wasting his gifts? Ought he to have found some way, by hook or by crook, of doing without all this journalism and getting on with his real work?

The answer, I think, is that the nature of Orwell's "real work" was slowly undergoing a change, and that this change was held back by the circumstances of his life, notably World War II, so that it had not worked itself out at the time of his premature death. He started, at the very beginning of his career, with all the gifts of the ideal pamphleteer. He could sketch a scene vividly, and leave it on one's mind not merely as a scene but as a social comment. His first book, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, is, in almost every way, as good as anything he ever did. The switch from Paris to London, from the world of sweated kitchen employees and picturesque émigrés to the world of hopeless, endlessly badgered human refuse, the petty officials and policemen who dealt with them, the housemaids who refused them a drink of cold water at the door ("We're not allowed to give anything to tramps"); all the atmosphere of boredom and futility, of endless movement which never results in getting anywhere, is conveyed with perfect skill and economy. Obviously, to write like this, Orwell needed continual contact with the actual social scene, particularly in those aspects which stimulated him to a violent response. *The Road to Wigan Pier* is another solidly well-done job on the same lines.

Then came *Homage to Catalonia*, which I am inclined to think his best book; certainly it contains his most memorable individual passages. Admittedly, some of the expository material about the nature of the Spanish political cross-currents is hard to read, as Orwell knew it would be when he felt impelled to put it in. For once, he has not been able to assimilate the social comment effortlessly into the descriptive reportage, not because his skill has failed him but because the material is too unfamiliar, too densely packed with detail that has to be explained. Meanwhile he was writing a whole series of novels, from *Burmese Days* in 1934 to *Coming Up For Air* in 1939, which are on the whole less satisfactory than his reporting books; they are interesting, honest, and very readable; but the good qualities they have are the same as the good qualities of the others. One does not feel, in going from, say, *Down and Out* to *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, that one is crossing a barrier, going from one kind of book to another. And of course this is just the feeling one ought to have. A novel, to realise its true potentialities, ought to have an entirely different feel from a book whose basic intention is documentary; it should take the

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reader more deeply into the situations it describes, making him feel his way more intricately, leading him in the end not so much to take sides, or to understand the nature of an immediate problem, but to expose him to the richness of life itself. (I agree that this is an old-fashioned ideal and that many present-day novelists write as if they had never heard of it; but that is their misfortune, not the novel's.)

THERE ARE MANY SIGNS that Orwell, as the '30s wore on, was coming to feel that he had done his stint of work in the reporting, pamphleteering, polemical kind of book and wanted to hold steady for a year or two and contemplate some big subject until he was able to write a real, old-fashioned, large-scale novel, with characters much more fully imagined than the brilliant pavement-artist sketches he had been doing up to that time. Thus he writes to a friend that what he really wants is two years' peace and quiet, but "as things are now, one might as well ask for two years on the moon." From this point of view everything got worse instead of better, and just when his interior tide was beginning to turn towards slower, more deeply meditated work, events forced him deeper into journalism and controversy. The war, in its early months, disorganised life so much that the writing of books was out of the question; later, from about 1942 onwards, things settled down on a makeshift basis, and there was on the face of it no reason why Orwell, as a man unfit for military service, shouldn't have gone to some quiet country spot where he could have grown potatoes and written novels—provided, of course, that he could have got anyone to pay him for the novels. But, by that time, he was too much embedded in war-time London, in his attempt to serve the Allied cause by broadcasting to India, in his cross-talk with people like Alex Comfort. In addition, his journalism was becoming well known, resulting in more and more pressure on him to write articles—a kind of pressure very difficult for a professional writer to resist. So it went on until, with the war safely over, he was at last able to get away to Jura. It was the wrong place for him, with his bad lungs, but he had been dreaming for at least five years of settling down a long way from London, which he hated, and out of the reach of editors, who were beginning seriously to persecute him.

ORWELL'S two last books, *Animal Farm* and *1984*, are on the earlier side of the great divide, a divide he had probably crossed already in some interior region of his being but was never to inhabit as a writer. The years of fighting against half-baked notions, against complacency and mental dishonesty, against the refusal to "think thoughts down to the roots," had left him with a dread of totalitarianism and the habits of mind it engendered. And, during those dismaying years just after 1945, when so many "intellectuals" seemed ready to sell out to Stalinism as blithely as they, or their counterparts, had sold out to Hitlerism ten years earlier, it was not in Orwell's nature simply to bow off the scene, to settle down in a book-lined retreat and begin the long wrestle with the problems of a "pure" literary art. If he had had a normal life-span, my guess is that by about 1953 he would have felt that the situation had at any rate reached stalemate and that there was no need for him to keep up his sentry-go. But, as we know, he died before even *that* unsatisfactory corner was turned. And whether he would have been successful in metamorphosing from a "committed" writer to a fully-formed imaginative novelist, there is no one who can say.

What is obvious is not only that whatever he wrote would have been valuable; but also that, as I said at the beginning, the work he actually did is still palpably with us, still making a difference in our lives. For my own part, I know that when I hear the pronouncements made by various influential people in the England of the '60s, I long for Orwell back again. But, since we can't have him, it is good to be able to use his work for its purpose: as an example, an incitement, and a justification. To read him is to be reminded of what honesty, goodwill, compassion for the unfortunate, really look like. And these things, as Samuel Johnson knew, are the starting-point of civilisation. As for his relevance: who can feel that the situation that faces free men has changed much from what it was in the '40s, or in the '30s, for that matter? The thing most to be feared is still a *trahison des clercs*: freedom still needs to be defended against those whom she most favours, whom she showers with advantages. At whatever point we are engaged in the never-ending battle against cant, whether we are trying to reckon up the myriad ways in which Western writers can get a good price for their integrity behind the Iron Curtain, or sorting out the multiple confusions in the latest pronouncement by someone like Cohn-Bendit, or keeping some kind of watch on politicians whose mouths speak of freedom for Africans while their brains think of money-bags for Europeans, it is Orwell who provides us with the best model of how to do it, and the most generous and communicable vision of why it should be done.

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The Sense of American Gobbledygook

By D. W. Brogan

MR. ROBERT MCNAMARA has just announced his pleasure that some rioting students were using the slogan, *"Down with Aristotle!"* It was not that Mr. McNamara was specifically against The Philosopher, but he was delighted to see the students moving away from mere semantics to discussing philosophical questions, even on the wrong side. There are no semantics in Mr. William Safire's book[1] nor are there any discussions of the meaning of meaning in the political vocabulary, no refutation of Weldon, no discussion of the ambiguities of the classical vocabulary. What Mr. Safire has admirably done is described in his sub-title: "An anecdotal Dictionary of Catchwords, Slogans, and Political usage." It is, of course, the new language of American politics and as such it is an indispensable guide to American political jargon. It is in fact an interesting guide to many aspects of American political life, and indeed to American life in general. But Mr. Safire does not confine himself to American political jargon. He often reaches back to discover European origins of words, phrases, and slogans and out even to Japanese parallels with American political gobbledygook. (It is a pity that Mr. Safire has not devoted more time to examples of "federal prose," that sticky jargon which flows slowly into the political bloodstream with usually disastrous results.)

Then Mr. Safire has not been content with consulting dictionaries or newspapers or historians. He has often consulted the living authors of certain, for the moment at any rate, important phrases or has had the question of the origins of terms like "the Cold War" discussed by those who think they know where they came from. He has been helped by Mr. Raymond Moley, Mr. Richard Nixon, and a great many other actors in recent American history, and for that alone his book would be of great value.

It is of great value not only in the sense that it tells us the origins of some of these weapons of political warfare, but that it uses some of the slogans, phrases, and linguistic creations to illustrate the nature of American political society. Arranged alphabetically, the book at first appears as rather a rag-bag of a great many different kinds of pieces of information, some important, some quite unimportant. But if read through to the end, a kind of pattern begins to appear, and it is quite easy to read through to the end because Mr. Safire has an intelligent and amusing clutter of examples, and if there is not a laugh on every page, there is a laugh on every second page. More than that, his investigations can lead to serious thought by his readers which may immunise them against some of the sillier legends enshrined in the American political vocabulary.

While it was very wise of Mr. Safire to look for origins of some American phrases, words, etc., outside the United States, he has sometimes not pushed his researches far enough. For example, he stops short in discovering the history of the metaphor of the torch bearer. It is not merely a kind of reference to modern relay races; it goes much further back than that, and finds its classical expression in a famous line of Lucretius, *quasi cursores vitai lampada tradunt*. Sometimes a phrase is given a purely American origin when it is, in fact, borrowed from another political system. For example, "three acres and a cow" was the slogan of Jesse Collings, one of Joe Chamberlain's collaborators in his Radical agrarian days. Other examples of political wit and wisdom dragged in from other political systems are wrong. Sir Winston Churchill never said of Clement Attlee that he was "a sheep in sheep's clothing." I have this on the excellent authority of Sir Winston himself. The phrase was totally inapplicable to Mr. Attlee. It was applicable, and applied, to J. Ramsay MacDonald, a very different kind of Labour leader.

Then some famous phrases are taken in their latest meaning and not in their first. For example, the term "Grand Old Man," applied to Gladstone and abbreviated to GOM, was originally applied to him by that cynical Radical Henry Labouchère, "the Christian member for Northampton" (the other member being the notorious atheist Charles Bradlaugh), as a rather irreverent joke. It was at once adopted by loyal

[1] *The New Language of Politics.* By WILLIAM SAFIRE. Random House, New York, $10.

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Liberals and was almost at once adopted as an acronym to describe Gladstone who was never, such was the awe in which he was held, not even behind his back even by his Cabinet, described as Gladstone, but always as the Prime Minister or Mr. Gladstone, and the only person who ever called him Gladstone to his face after the first Gladstone administration was Lord Granville who had been at Eton with him.

It might also be suggested that "George Spelvin" is not simply a hungry actor who takes a walking-on part, but the name given to all actors who pad out the lower echelons of a play. And again, in a moment of patriotic pride, I should like to suggest that the most brilliant use of the term "dark horse" was made by John Morley (known to good Radicals as "honest John Morley," no doubt to distinguish him from his colleagues); he called Lord Rosebery (who was as proud of having won the Derby as of having been Prime Minister) "a dark horse in a loose box." (The term "loose box" was also used to describe the special accommodation provided for the mistresses of Edward VII at his coronation in Westminster Abbey in 1902.) There are, I fear, a good many other minor mistakes which will irritate the pedantic, and I am pedantic. I think Cavour's *tact des choses possibles* antedated Bismarck's variation, which is the only source given here; and that the originator of the phrase, "We are all socialists now," was not the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, but Sir William Harcourt.

The origin of Woodrow Wilson's use of the term "covenant" is not as obscure as is suggested here, and can be explained in terms of the history of the Woodrow family in Scotland. And, a last indignant protest, the emblem of Scotland is not the unicorn, but the lion rampant. Since the unicorn is especially associated with chastity, it might be thought improper as an emblem of the "ancient Kingdom."

To turn now to the contributions which Mr. Safire makes to American history and to the understanding of American politics. He carefully distinguishes between the obsolete or obsolescent phrases which politicians use but which have no weight with the general public (Mr. Truman was fond of reviving obsolete phrases of this kind) and the living phrases which, even though they only obfuscate the public mind, do affect it. Mr. Archibald MacLeish once said, "America is promises." America is also rhetoric, and as a guide to political rhetoric this is most entertaining and illuminating. True, the explanations of some of these phrases seem to me to lack accuracy. For example, "Old line Whigs" does not refer to the skirmish line, but to the regular line infantry of the Revolutionary Army, *e.g.*, the Maryland line; but this does not matter to the public who understand quite well what is meant by "old line," a term of abuse depending in meaning on your own stance. We have plenty of illustrations of the ambiguities of terms like democracy, Democrat, Republican, Conservative, Radical, and the like. Of course, the habit of transferring an epithet to the other party is a very old one. "Whig" and "Tory" began as terms of abuse in 17th-century Britain, and nobody in America today would like to be called a Tory, a point which FDR understood extremely well; but many are very glad to be called Conservatives, and some pedantically point out the difference between "a republic" and "a democracy." Then there are words, for example, "mugwump," which are almost obsolete today, but not *quite* obsolete, for the spiritual heirs of the mugwumps are visible, especially in the Eastern Establishment. (The originator of the term "Establishment" in this sense is Mr. Henry Fairlie, not "an angry young man" when he resided in London, and still less one now that he resides in Washington. It was launched in that far from angry paper, *The Spectator*.)

There are the people who are "do-gooders" (this is a term of abuse in America) or "starry-eyed" (also a term of abuse in the country of the Star-spangled Banner and of *South Pacific*). Socialism is almost actionable, and the charge of Communist *has* been held to be actionable. But there is no royalist party, however devoted in the news-gathering sense Americans are to news of the British royal family; so FDR could get roaring applause from his supporters by denouncing his Tory, Conservative, Republican opponents as "economic royalists."

The success of Mr. Truman in 1948 in taking the offensive has led many American politicians to do the same, *e.g.*, Mr. Richard Nixon in 1958; he took the offensive all right, but the Democrats were not as passive as the Republicans were in 1948. There is such a thing in boxing as "leading with your chin." Mr. Nixon did that in 1958, whatever he does in 1968. It can be argued that in 1960 he didn't lead with his chin or any other part of his anatomy, and thus was defeated by John Kennedy.

There is a general sociological characteristic of this book which might be noted. Although not quite as historically minded in political controversy as the French, the Americans are much more historically minded than are the English. Few people in England remember the slogans even of the last general election, and few people remember the traditional slogans of their party.

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But American politicians, television operatives, editorial writers all through this world tend to rely on ghostly historical memories. Everybody claims Lincoln, including people who would detest the whole spirit of the Second Inaugural (even in the South it is now tolerable to mention Lincoln favourably, although Senator Thurmond never does). Appeals to the memory of Valley Forge, of Gettysburg (the Battle and the speech, not yet the Eisenhower farm), even Bastogne and Iwo Jima are politically useful. Some famous past slogans are dreadful warnings. For example, with the growing need to cultivate "minority" and "ethnic" groups, the old and famous gaffe of denouncing the Democrats as the party of "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion" will not be consciously repeated. But of course some politicians are barely conscious and innocent or not so innocent sneers at ethnic groups are locally profitable. On the whole, American politicians, as is pointed out here, cultivate the three *I*'s, "Ireland, Italy, Israel." When it was discovered that the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Mr. Robert Briscoe (who was spending most of his term in the United States), was an Irish Republican hero of Jewish origin, one desperate politician in my presence remarked, "Why in hell hasn't he got an Italian mother?" (It might be pointed out that Mayor LaGuardia had an Italian father and a Jewish mother, which didn't hurt him in New York.) Of course, in the South appeals to heroic memories of the Confederacy go down just as well as appeals to the devotion of the South to the Stars-and-Stripes, a devotion not very visible two generations ago. It was an example of Senator Goldwater's innocence that he chose to make a "Confederate" speech in Knoxville, Tennessee, during which, among other things, he attacked the TVA. But he also spoke under a Confederate flag since no one had told him that Knoxville was a great Unionist stronghold during the Civil War and had actually been besieged by the Rebels. It was like playing "God save Ireland" in Derry City on August 16th.

One beneficial result of the careful use of this book is that it will save, or should save, British politicians and publicists from some of the innumerable blunders they make in discussing American politics, assuming that what goes in one country goes in another, or, still worse, assuming they understand American slang and can use it safely. (Thus, before the last war, Sir Samuel Hoare thought jitterbugs were people who were jittery. He was jittery, but he was not a jitterbug.) Then they might learn something about the variations of class distinctions in the United States. They exist, especially among the WASPs, but they are not quite the same class distinctions as in Britain. A great many Americans do not understand this themselves. There is the famous story of a lively discussion in a smart New York club in which FDR was attacked as being "a traitor to his class." A member who was the head of a very old, distinguished and, more important, rich family (he is the father of the present junior Senator from Rhode Island) protested. "The President is not a traitor to your class; he doesn't belong to it. You are business men. He is a gentleman." But on the whole these distinctions are known only at very exalted levels indeed.

The anecdotes which are so rightly supplied here are not pointless and are not merely amusing; they do tell us a great deal about American political life and a great deal about American political methods. Not all of it is edifying. (For example, I learned for the first time in reading this book of how a friend of mine, now deceased, was involved in a comparatively innocent way in one of the scandals of the Truman régime; but as it was a scandal associated with the needs of his business, it was almost pardonable—perhaps more pardonable under a Republican than in a Democratic administration.) And even people who think of

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themselves as well informed will find something new on every fourth or fifth page anyway. For example, I learned that August 18th (the birthday of the Emperor Francis Joseph among other people) is to be "Black Independence Day" because 18 August 1965 was the date of the famous Watts riots:

> "On August 18 1965," said Brown [H. "Rap Brown, SNCC national chairman], "blacks stopped moaning *'We Shall Overcome'* and started swinging to *'Burn, Baby, Burn.'* That was our declaration of independence."

And to conclude with, I think, a delightfully implausible explanation of the title of a very famous institution, the acronym RAND is not, I am informed on very good authority, the acronym for "Research and Development," but shorthand for the sale of random numbers out of which esoteric industry the whole great and possibly dangerous institution has grown.

Remembering C.N.D.

LOOKING BACK on the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), it is now possible to see that it stood significantly, if indecisively, at the parting of many ways. It was the last attempt to carry the concept of Britain's "moral leadership" into the practical politics of the late 20th century, but it also bore the stigmata of a frustrated nationalism which betrayed the fact—all too evident to foreigners—that no such claim could be sustained in reality. It was the first of the European movements of protest, but the last to be relatively peaceable even when ostentatiously breaking the law. It marked the moment when the leftwing of the Labour party was overcome by the right and centre, and the party was set upon its present course away from the traditional pieties of English socialism. But it also showed that evolution in the thinking of a section of Labour politicians and party workers was going to come too slowly for the comfort of any Labour government. Finally, the campaign seems likely to be the last occasion for some time on which foreign policy was to become a burning subject of dispute in British life.

Twined in Laocoon-like complexity within the history of CND lay a moral issue (the traditional objectives of pacifism heightened and intensified by the existence of "the Bomb"), a foreign policy issue (whether Britain should continue to belong to an alliance system headed by the United States), and a political issue (the personalities of Labour party leadership). All these were embodied in a movement which rapidly became a way of life for many of its adherents. The excitements of an Aldermaston March or a sit-down in Trafalgar Square, though mild enough compared with the defence of barricades on the Rue des Écoles, were to leave indelible memories behind them. It is not surprising that the struggle produced its own demonology or that CND members often appeared as much concerned to boo Gaitskell as to Ban the Bomb. The first objective was, after all, a good deal more easily attained than the second.

To disentangle these knotted threads a book will have to be written some day by an author possessing the necessary knowledge of international affairs and British domestic politics. So far no such challenger has appeared. Dr. Parkin's contribution[1] is certainly not what is required. In so far as it deals with politics it has a distinct whiff of naïvety about it. Take, for example, the verdict on Gaitskell's reversal at Blackpool of the Scarborough unilateralist vote:

> Although at the 1961 Annual Conference Gaitskell duly won the victory he had staked so much on, it may be doubted whether leadership of such an inflexible kind was really in the best interests of the Party. A leader of any mass political party is generally expected to be able to balance off the contending interest groups and opinions which inevitably develop within its ranks, rather than openly to identify himself with one particular faction.

But Gaitskell was fighting for his political life after a lost general election, and the issue had been chosen by his opponents within the party as one on which to challenge him. As Henry Fairlie has recently written in a far more pertinent judgment on these events, "Gaitskell saw quite clearly that, on such a vital issue on which the party should be judged by the country, it was the authority of the party leader, and not that of the party conference, which needed to be asserted. . . . He bequeathed to Wilson a party united by a necessary, if dramatic, exhibition of political courage." Moreover, Dr. Parkin neglects to take into account the attitude of the Parliamentary Labour Party—the real repository of power in the Labour movement—and its support

[1] *Middle Class Radicalism: The Social Bases of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.* By FRANK PARKIN. Manchester University Press, 35s.

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of Gaitskell on this issue. A certain remove from political reality is also suggested by his remark about the three trade unions who switched their block votes to Gaitskell in 1961: that this "could hardly have inspired faith in the unions' democratic process." It would be interesting to know who or what could inspire such faith in regard to bodies whose leaders are frequently elected by a small fraction of their membership. British trade unions have great qualities, but their "democratic process" is not one of them.

DR. PARKIN IS A SOCIOLOGIST rather than a political scientist, and the results of his investigation of the opinions, emotions and background of CND supporters are of great interest, if not always particularly surprising. The picture which emerges is, in fact, strangely similar to that sketched at the time by writers with little else to guide them than their own observations and intuitions. Of course, anyone might have guessed that a vast majority of CND members would strongly disagree with the statement that *"ordinary people cannot hope to change government policies"* or would not have much time for the British Monarchy. But it is curious to see how Dr. Parkin's researches confirm a feeling which some of us had that CND's overwhelmingly middle-class membership was concerned primarily with what might be called moral (and even aesthetic) issues (homosexual law reform, capital punishment, aid to underdeveloped countries) rather than with the bread-and-butter stuff of British politics (taxation, social services, nationalisation). Symbolically, most of those middle-class members of the movement who were asked about their reasons for banning the bomb gave priority to the moral argument that it was "a fundamentally evil weapon." CND was once described as "the revolt of the politically virgin," and its rejection of politics in favour of intransigent moral attitudes is only confirmed by the hostility of its residual supporters towards the "lost leaders" who have become ministers in a Labour government that has kept the bomb. As Mr. Peter Cadogan has recently put it when pronouncing the epitaph of the Committee of 100, "World war did not happen, and almost to a man the V.I.P.s fell away. . . ." The implied conclusion that, in a world determined by CND preconceptions, world war *would* have happened, thereby rallying the waverers, is a presumably unintentional example of the difficulties into which moralists get themselves when they engage in politics.

Dr. Parkin also demonstrates the extent to which the majority of CND militants were a captive audience, pre-conditioned to battle against authority embodied in the symbolically detestable decision to keep Britain in the nuclear arms race:

> In other words, an individual's commitment to CND could to a large extent be said to be determined by his existing pre-disposition to deviance [from the dominant values of British society].

And a considerable proportion of CND supporters were not merely predisposed towards protest themselves, but came from an environment where other people were too. In the 15 to 25 age-group 62 per cent came from homes where at least one parent supported, or approved of, the movement. Behind Dr. Parkin's tables looms the presence of a section of the middle class within which protest is conformity and the results achieved by a "campaign" are less important than the process of revolt itself:

> Attraction to CND appears to have depended not simply on individuals accepting the case against the Bomb and for the Campaign, but rather on their having the kind of prior value orientation which made this case psychologically appealing.

Within this middle-class radical milieu dissent becomes woven into the texture of life. Like other brands of non-conformist its members feel obliged to mark their difference from the unenlightened middle classes for whom they might otherwise be mistaken by means of "small symbolic gestures." ("The wearing of beards did appear to be more common among CND supporters than among men in general; also many respondents indicated they were vegetarians.") This association of middle-class radicalism with defiant personal idiosyncrasy in terms of dress, diet, and medical treatment has already been described by many writers, notably Orwell. That CND should have run true to form is exactly what might be expected. The formidable wraiths of Peter Simple's Dutt-Pauker family have been endowed with somewhat milder flesh by Dr. Parkin's enquiry.

NONE OF THIS, OF COURSE, necessarily detracts from the validity of CND as a movement of protest. The fact that such movements contain a built-in appeal for middle-class radicals is beside the point. What differentiates them one from another is their measure of success in getting positive results. Judged by this standard, CND hardly comes up to its predecessors, the Anti-Corn Law League or the Chartists. Dr. Parkin points to CND's lack of ideology (compared to pre-war "Left Book Club" radicalism,

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for example) as one of its attractions for middle-class people. But it may also be that the lack of any hard skeleton of thought within the movement contributed to its failure to produce much in the way of concrete results. For it is in the nature of a movement which, like CND, is directed towards producing an indeterminate moral, rather than a specific political, change in society that it will either have to achieve total success or be condemned to total failure. Compromise solutions and partial gains are excluded.

In this sense CND was a portent, and American radicals who proclaim their desire to "search for a psychic community, in which one's own identity can be defined, social and personal relationships based on love can be established and can grow . . ." are its heirs. For, though the ambitions of those who marched to Aldermaston may in one way have been "more limited" than the plans of the pre-war Marxists with their blue-prints for a future state-socialism, in another they were far wider. What CND (and, subsequently, the New Left) really looked for was a change in human nature, Although its followers still believed in the possibility of influencing the principalities and powers of Whitehall, their basic lack of genuinely political objectives meant that they could hardly stop short of a transformation of man himself. And CND's failure to make an impression on the British government was to give apparent substance in the eyes of middle-class radicals to the New Left view of advanced industrial society expressed early on by Ralph Schoenman:

> Men are dependent on vast and impersonal societies. These societies are highly ordered, controlled by powerful autocracies, and they are essentially totalitarian in their organisation.

Now America and Western Europe have to cope with a brand of dissent which is still essentially unpolitical in character, still has CND's lofty moral ambitions, but lacks CND's confidence in its own ability to impress them on society at large. Thus the new wave of student revolt has taken on a character of sporadic violence, a campaign conducted from the secure base of an academic community against a society not so much in need of reform as condemned to destruction.

Here again CND was a watershed which even those who fought against it may come to remember with nostalgia—if only as the last occasion on which English radicalism was to be seen in its 19th-century form, bearded, booted, and rucksacked for an ethical country ramble.

Anthony Hartley

Idols & Arrow-heads

Prehistoric Art in Europe. By N. K. SANDARS. Penguin Books (The Pelican History of Art). £6 6s.

THE WORLD of prehistoric art is so vast in both space and time that it has neither a properly mapped and chartered *terra cognita* nor a precise and acceptable chronology. Where and when does it begin or end? What is "art" and what are merely artefacts? And who were genuine artists and who simply whittlers and daubers? Confronted with these formidable problems of selection, the pre-historian needs immense erudition and even greater fortitude to tackle the subject at all. Let us state at once that Miss Nancy Sandars has succeeded brilliantly in her ambitious task. She has produced a well-written, well-illustrated, and well-documented book, and we should be sincerely grateful to her for completing what she herself calls "a perhaps rash undertaking."

Miss Sandars, then, is aware of the difficulties and dangers of her project. She states in her foreword that "prehistoric art is neither art nor prehistory, but it is something of both." How well that sums up the dilemma! For if the writer is not qualified as an artist to talk about his subject, his opinion will not carry much weight with the *cognoscenti*; and if he is deficient as a pre-historian, his findings will undoubtedly be dismissed as valueless by the academicians.

Here again Miss Sandars is conscious of the difficulties, particularly of a too-"arty" approach. She points out that a number of her predecessors in the field attempted to formulate various aesthetic systems which are now regarded with "a healthy suspicion." (What science affirms today, science contradicts tomorrow.) She wisely discards these systems and settles for the traditional chronological divisions of Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, and so on. She thus protects herself from falling into the trap which awaits all writers on the subject: namely, the interpretation by 20th-century standards of the motives of our hirsute ancestors and the significance of their works of art.

It follows that Miss Sandars' book is bound to be a sober and serious work of scholarship which makes no concessions to sensationalism. Indeed, if it were not for the author's stimulating ideas and her clear and uncluttered style, the very nature of the subject would limit the appeal of this work to the specialist, for we are up against a formidable nomenclature in the field of prehistory. "Palaeolithic" we can swallow; but "Paudorf oscillation" and "Gottweig Interstadial" tend to stick in the gullet.

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And so with a great deal of prehistory. Is there anything in our museums so soporific as those cases of flints labelled "Middle Acheulian," or so uninspiring as those lumps of limestone crudely carved into faceless statutettes? True, when we come to the cave paintings, we (*i.e.*, the non-specialists) perk up considerably, because we instinctively feel that we are at last in the presence of men and artists; and, in any case, many of the pictures are beautiful in themselves in contrast with those arrow-heads which are, let us admit it, merely lifeless shards.

The need to choose between artefacts and works of art illustrates the difficulty of the task confronting a scholar of even Miss Sandars' ability. Fortunately, her work as a pre-historian (*Bronze Age Cultures in France,* 1957), and her skill as an interpreter of ancient literature (*The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 1960) combine to make her an excellent guide through the long and obscure byways of the remote past. One must not, however, expect the journey she takes us on to be an easy one. It requires almost as much dedication to get there on the part of the traveller as it must have done for our guide to explore the way.

We begin around B.C. 30,000 with an ivory statuette of a man found at Brno in Moravia and, closely associated with this man in time, the famous Willendorf Venus. The former of these figurines is badly ravaged; the latter quite well preserved. Clearly both are conscious works of art as compared with arrow-heads, hand-axes, and the other utilitarian objects of the older periods. But how did it happen that man passed with one leap, as it were, from percussing hand tools into sculpting statuettes which would undoubtedly set *avant-garde* critics all agog if they were exhibited today in the appropriate *milieu*? Neither Miss Sandars nor anybody else can answer this question, of course; but the question does illustrate the complexity of the subject.

And how complex it is! One comes back to this again and again, for we find Miss Sandars speculating that the crooked line of a woman's brow and the slightly drawn-up mouth as found in an ivory carving from the Dolní Vestonice hut site in Czechoslovakia may be the realistic portrait of a woman who had received an injury to the nerve of her left cheek. But, she adds, "the distortion of the carving may be due to the need to avoid the completed perfection of symmetry." Could not the layman suggest a third explanation—that the sculptor was not yet master enough of his medium to produce anything other than what he did? Yes, how puzzling it all is: how to explain why some female idols of roughly the same period are as

George Kennan

DEMOCRACY AND THE STUDENT LEFT

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round as tubs (the Willendorf and other Venuses); others are elongated like sticks; and still others resemble Hottentots with sway backs and pronounced steatopygy. Trying to be a prehistorian and art critic at the same time under these conditions is like wandering in a maze lined with distorting mirrors.

STILL, IT IS ONLY RIGHT that Miss Sandars should see things in her own way and advance theories which are essentially personal. What we want in prehistory are more ideas and fewer Paudorf oscillations. Full marks, therefore, to Miss Sandars in her discussion of the so-called Laussel Venus, a relief on a block of rock found in a shelter in the Dordogne and dated from *circa* B.C. 19,000. Here she suggests that the left side of the bisected figure could be compared with the outline of Titian's "Ellesmere Venus," though she hastens to add that comparison of the two *finished* works is ludicrous. Still, "if outlines only are taken, there is a surprising likeness of proportion and pose." An evocative suggestion, even if one which would cause Titian to turn in his grave. (The cult of primitive art had not, of course, been invented in his day.)

Changing her art critic's hat for her ethnologist's headgear, Miss Sandars writes:

> It is unfortunate that the nude female figures have been indiscriminately labelled "Venuses," concentrating attention on their erotic or fertility aspect and reducing something much more complex and less well-defined to the inappropriate categories of a later mythology.

If I read Miss Sandars aright, this is a polite way of expressing scepticism of those theories which specialists have devised to blind the laymen with science—fertility rites, maternity cults, sympathetic magic, and so forth. As a professional, she is probably chary about challenging too boldly the claims of her colleagues; but she does suggest in her quiet way that "we have sometimes over- as well as underestimated the scant relics of the past; because of their immense age and rarity, we tend to regard all as of equal merit. But as well as the masterpieces, there were no doubt many run-of-the-mill products, popular versions, and personal fetishes."

This leads Miss Sandars to ask the most fascinating and difficult question of all: What motivated the prehistoric artists to produce such an immense *corpus* of sculpture, engraving, and rock painting? And, an even more puzzling aspect of their achievement: Why did they choose such inaccessible places in which to work—places so difficult to reach that the modern student has to be a speleologist in order to see them at all? She reminds us that the discoverers of the French art galleries of the Dordogne crawled, waded, and groped their way 700 yards inside the tortuous labyrinth of the Tuc D'Audoubert before they arrived at the "bison hall." And who knows what lies beyond?

She admits that she does not know the answer and can only suggest that the drive to enter the darkness of deep caverns is inherent; but the mind of civilised and urbanised man obviously cannot even begin to comprehend the motives, let alone the difficulties, of working under these conditions.

On the subject of *how* the paintings were executed, Miss Sandars is able to be more specific. The prehistoric artists used minerals as pigments, pounding up the rocks and thinning them with water, while using some kind of animal fat or vegetable juice as a binding medium. The colour was then applied with the fingers, or a chewed stick, or dabbed on with a fur brush, or blown on through a tube. All this was done by the light of a lamp fashioned from a hollow stone filled with fat or charcoal.

Now if there were only a few paintings found in the French and Spanish caves (and, for that matter, in Africa), the achievement would be astonishing enough. But when we consider that there are tens of thousands of rock paintings upwards from B.C. 15,000, we are at an even

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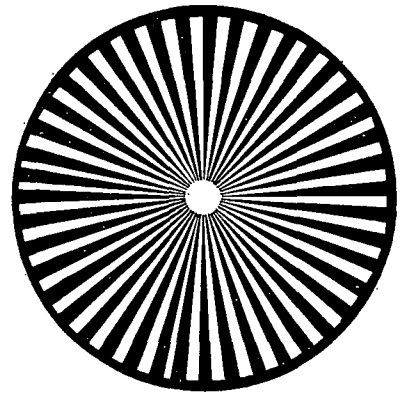
greater loss to explain the "why" of this incredible artistic output. For despite the vast literature of the subject—hundreds of books in many languages—none of the theories propounded seems wholly convincing; and the more the theory smells of the lamp, the less light it throws on the matter. Those of us who have seen a great deal of rock art *in situ* frankly do not find such formulas as "symbolistic magic" conclusive, for the simple reason that the enormous number of animal paintings, for instance, precludes the idea that picture-making was purely ceremonial, concerned with some quasi-religious rites comparable with those associated with witch-doctors, medicine-men, shamans, and the like. It is rather as if our remote ancestors, deprived of the blessings of the cinema, television, and bingo, occupied their leisure hours with daubing the rocks for recreation and (for all we know) with prettying up their habitations.

Somewhat along these unorthodox lines, Miss Sandars expresses doubts about the standard theory concerning the ritualistic significance of the animals portrayed with darts in their flanks. Perhaps she asked herself the question which the layman will certainly ask: How do we know these cavemen believed in divine intervention? Or, were they sophisticated enough to create some sort of divinity who could help them in return for whatever brand of mumbo-jumbo they favoured? Alternatively, could not a wounded animal be drawn by a man who was boasting of his prowess as a hunter? "This is how I killed my bison."

And so with still another "classic" theory: fertility magic—draw a gravid deer, and the family will eat well in the coming winter. Or, sculpt a statuette of a fat woman, and all the females of the tribe will become pregnant. Miss Sandars implies, however, that most of these theories are now old hat. Instead, we have some new academic double-talk, more suited to the computer age. For instance, the experts no longer speak of the curious doodles found alongside the more recognisable objects as signs representing tents, houses, traps, and the like. Tectiforms, claviforms, and scudiforms are out. In are male and female symbols. Miss Sandars gives us a sample of the current jargon:

> According to this theory, male and female signs are associated with individual animals in such a way as to explain the great number of subjects along lines of a strict polarity of sex. Accordingly horse, ibex, and deer are over and above their animal character, symbols of masculinity; and bison, cattle, and mammoth are the corresponding female symbols, even if this means that the female is represented by a bull and the male by a pregnant mare.



André Maurois

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Confronted with pretentious twaddle of this variety, one becomes nostalgic for the dear old Victorian "fertility rites" and "maternity cults."

THE FARTHER UP IN TIME we come, the firmer ground we find ourselves upon. By B.C. 5000 we are almost within view, as it were, of our forefathers. Their tools, weapons, and way of life are now comprehensible. As Miss Sandars notes, neolithic man is modern in that he kills his fellow-man out of hate as much as he kills animals for food. He had not, of course, developed to the stage of genocide or of blood sports, but he had domesticated animals and severed his relationship with the primeval world of the great beasts. His art changed accordingly, and soon we are in an aesthetic milieu about which we can make judgements more or less according to our own standards. We are now linked, as it were, both by artistic and religious concepts, to a more familiar world. The bronze of a Dancing Woman could be featured in an exhibition of modern sculpture without anybody realising that it was over 2,000 years old. The *cognoscenti* might well gaze at it and say, "Brancusi, perhaps? Possibly, Lipchitz?" Readers of Miss Sandars' book will be able to reply, "No. Unknown sculptor, first century B.C."

So we arrive after a space-time journey of some 20,000 years at the end of prehistoric art. Soon the whole of barbarian Europe was to be conquered by the Romans, and the native arts were to be submerged by or incorporated into the ideas, religions, skills, and tastes of the classical world. Here Miss Sandars leaves us on familiar ground. It is really scarcely necessary for her to apologise in a postscript for her "all too short review" which, she says, "is not prehistoric art of Europe as it really was, but only as it appears to one interested enquirer." Miss Sandars is manifestly more than an interested enquirer. She is a scholar who has devoted a lifetime to original research and one who has managed to escape the suffocating orthodoxy of the schools. We do not know how many sites from Norway to Malta, from Ireland to Hungary, she has visited, or how many museums she has passed through, but she obviously has a working knowledge of all of them.

She has been fortunate, too, in her publisher, for her book is beautifully printed and illustrated with nearly 300 line drawings and over 200 photographs of prehistoric artefacts; and bibliography, index, maps, and tables are all exemplary. The book costs six guineas, or the price of four new novels. For this sum the reader can take many an exciting journey without ever leaving his armchair.

James Wellard

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LETTERS

Reason and Unreason

THE TONE OF your August issue convinces me of the imminence of a shift in the political spectrum that I have for some time anticipated: that moderate conservatives will feel able to unite with democratic socialists in opposing the neo-conservative "liberal" authoritarianism so widely represented in your pages.

The traditional concern of conservatism with the freedom and rights of the individual citizen stands in direct contrast both to the administrative ethos of British Fabianism and to the benevolent despotism of American Federal Government. The Fabians were perfectly frank about their contempt for ordinary people and their faith in the administrator. Modern governments aren't so explicit about it and couldn't afford to be, but we must assume, to use a time-honoured expression, that they would put their mouth where their money is.

David Marquand ["May Day Illusions"] offers us an up-dated version of the Platonic noble lie. The people do not really want socialism (hardly surprising when no political party now advocates it) so we should be glad that the fact that they still vote along class lines enables the government to satisfy the intellectuals by giving them at least a modicum of what is good for them against their will.

The modern political party promises to save everyone from a fate worse than death. The people are saved from dangerous radicals who advocate wild and impractical ideas like socialism or democratising our system of government; while Left-wing intellectuals are warned that any attempt to criticise the men who man the portfolios will mean that they will be delivering themselves over, bound hand and foot, into the savage hands of the Radical Right.

Modern liberalism *needs* Goldwaterism, *needs* Powellism in order to maintain its credibility as liberalism and in order to maintain its unchallenged exercise of power. That is the emerging reality of contemporary politics.

As for Raymond Aron, if he had actually read Chairman Mao's little red book—a not unreasonable expectation in a Professor of Sociology and a pontificator on the French student situation—he would find, for what it's worth, that the ultra-democratic tendencies which he finds so alarming are there specifically condemned (pp. 162–4). But then, since your contributors claim a monopoly of reason and intelligence, there is, presumably, little point in trying to investigate the *Weltanschauung* of unreason. Actually it's getting pretty hard to tell which side the hysteria is on.

Since the brutal suppression of freedom in Czechoslovakia, what modern liberalism also needs, but which it was in danger of losing, is the cold war. For the emergence of a democratic form of socialism in Czechoslovakia was potentially as explosive in its implications for the West as for the East. At this time of tragedy for the Czech people perhaps the greatest homage we can pay them is to keep alive the memory of that promise and not use what has happened as the subject for a sermon on the evils of Soviet Stalinism, which by now surely needs nothing more in the way of condemnation by words, when it condemns itself so utterly by its own actions.

DAVID MORSE

University of Sussex

"Revolution Diary"

ESPECIALLY in the light of our American experience with student revolutionaries, I found a number of European remarks in Melvin J. Lasky's "Revolution Diary" [ENCOUNTER, August] strikingly apt. The young historian in Prague is quite right to ask (although he more than suspects the answer), "In what world have these fellows been living? Are they so busy marching up and down in demonstrations that they don't have time to read the books in their library?..." My impression is that the ignorance of politics and history—and life—among this new radical generation is almost invincible. And Lasky's young "Jürgen S." in Berlin was quite perceptive when he observed, "One's life begins, one opens one's eyes, one begins to make things out—and suddenly the curtain of history goes up for the first time. Nothing has ever happened before. Only later, when one reads and thinks and lives a little and has a past of one's own, does anything in the past become meaningful...."

As I write this, I note the following item in the current *New Republic*'s account of the U.S. national convention of the *S.D.S.* which led the revolt at Columbia University and has generally been the revolutionary *avant-garde*. It reported the unopposed election as National Secretary of "Michael Klonsky, 25, a graduate of San Fernando State College and now an organiser in Los Angeles...." And it added the following, almost incredible quotation:

> "Somebody accused Klonsky of being a Stalinist. Klonsky replied, 'Having been a communist only a few months, I have difficulty in understanding what you mean by that.'"

I can imagine the bewildered disbelief this may elicit in both Berlin and Prague. But I am sorry. That's like it is.

RICHARD MORRISSON

New York City

Chinese Make-Believe

I AGREE wholeheartedly with Mr. Holmes Welch that we need research into Chinese psychology [*The Chinese Art of Make-Believe*, by Holmes Welch, ENCOUNTER, May]. Any insights here would

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save those of us working on China untold hours now wasted in barren speculation, but unfortunately Mr. Welch does not provide any.

The way Mr. Welch writes, one would almost think that he is unaware of what the new developments in semantics have taught us. Or he chooses to ignore them. During the Second World War, in the U.S. and in this country, commonly-used German words were replaced by war-oriented Anglo-Saxonisms: *sauerkraut* became victory cabbage, and in some circles, even *frankfurters* and *wieners* had different names. Earlier, in Victorian days, the word "legs" was considered vulgar; men and women of fashion then talked of the "limbs" of a table, etc. These examples are to show that our vocabulary is not immutable: words change meanings, new words are introduced, and others go out of circulation in response to evolving situations. Just to produce a few anecdotes, particularly the old one about Peking and Peiping and the relatively new one about street-naming by Red Guards, and say that the Chinese do more of this than other people is so much academic hair-splitting.

I should have thought that Mr. Welch would have been more sensible than to carry his theory of make-believe to the lengths that he does. How simple he makes the betterment of Sino-American relations sound, especially in his suggestion of getting the Americans to accept *pretending* one thing or another, as a first step toward an eventual thaw. Unfortunately, the issues are substantive, not of style: the question of the Seventh Fleet in Chinese waters, American troops in Taiwan, and China's place in the United Nations. These are *political* issues and have nothing to do with Chinese psychology, least of all with the simplistic one that Mr.

The Four-Letter Word:

London

THE B.B.C. *last night withdrew a broadcast talk on the Third Programme by David Caute, the novelist and former Fellow of All Souls, about the American writer, Norman Mailer, after Mr. Caute had refused to remove a word from his text.*

A statement by the B.B.C. said that the talk had been cancelled "due to a difference of opinion with Mr. Caute on the inclusion of an expression which, in the view of the B.B.C., would give offence to some listeners, and which was not thought to be essential to the argument of the talk."

The expression occurs in one of the quotations from Norman Mailer. Mr. Percy Newby (Controller, B.B.C. Third Programme) claimed that there was a distinction between a book which one read and a broadcast which conveyed the sense of being made available to everyone.

Mr. Newby said that when the Third Programme was broadcasting a poem in which "certain words" were used, one would try to achieve a literary justification for them. Sometimes one would say that the words were necessary. But referring to the word which the B.B.C. wanted to excise from Mr. Caute's talk, it was difficult to justify its appearance in the talk from an artistic point of view.

GUARDIAN/TIMES

THE *use of four-letter words, an issue long settled in the pubs of Chelsea and the little magazines, is still unresolved at the B.B.C.*

The Third Programme cancelled a talk which included a four-letter word. Yesterday The Listener *(published by the B.B.C.) printed the word in a letter protesting against the cancellation and signed by 17 well-known writers.*

Mr. Karl Miller, editor of The Listener, *said: "I think it is a reasonable thing to publish a letter like that from a number of responsible people. I think their point deserves to be made." In his view the issue was fairly complicated but could not be called "a great issue" because many books had been published, including John le Carré's latest novel, in which the word was used.*

The signatories to the protest letter, including Angus Wilson, John Updike, Mordecai Richler, V. S. Pritchett, and Olivia Manning, point out that the Third Programme is meant to be a place where serious modern work may be seriously discussed for adult audiences; and much modern writing, particularly the best American fiction, uses four-letter words frequently.

"We deplore and condemn the timidity which allows important books to be criticised but not quoted, and we urge the B.B.C. to reconsider its attitude at once."

In a letter in yesterday's Listener *Mr J. A. Camacho, Head of Talks and Current Affairs (Radio), explains the decision to cancel the talk.*

"On this occasion I did not think the quotation Mr. Caute wished to broadcast was essential to the argument, the understanding, or the enjoyment of his talk. Accordingly, in the exercise of what I believe to be a justifiable editorial responsibility, I asked him to authorise its removal. He would not do so and, therefore, in consultation with Mr. Howard Newby (Controller of the Third Programme), the latter and I jointly decided to cancel the talk."

THE GUARDIAN

THE FOUR-LETTER WORD, *which in the past could only be seen on the walls of men's washrooms and heard only in GI barracks, is now popping*

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Welch develops. I might add, on the subject of Sino-American relations, that the United States, too, has spun around herself a web of illusions. The policy of hostility enunciated by Dulles was founded on hopes of disintegration of China's Communist government from within, when it was perfectly clear that this government enjoyed widespread support. Non-recognition of China and prohibition of trade with her ontinue to this day, as forms of punishment. Who lives in a greater world of make-believe? It seems to me U.S. policy-makers have a lot of illusions which they ought to disabuse themselves of, for a start.

I TAKE ISSUE with Mr. Welch on many points of detail, but I will just mention two: firstly, foreign trade cannot have been all that useful, when valuable Chinese exports of tea, silk, and all sorts of mineral and agricultural produce went to pay for imports of opium, cosmetics, and military hardware for conflicts between warlords. Secondly, if Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek, too, talk of "uniting theory and practice," what relevance has this to the so-called Chinese capacity for make-believe? Is this not what any sensible man should aim to do? In the process, we might even succeed in reducing the "credibility gap," such a big problem, one gathers, in the United States now.

May I offer some constructive proposals? China is vastly different now from what it must have been like, say, twenty years ago. When I was there in mid-1966, I was struck by two facts. Firstly, the Western-designated "sick man of Asia" has now become the strongest. This must affect the Chinese profoundly: their image of self has altered as radically as the foreign image of the Chinaman.

. . . "*!@x"

up all over the place. This is causing a great deal of concern among philologists who feel that the word is becoming so common that it will soon lose its impact.

Prof. Weymouth Langue, who has made a lifetime study of four-letter words at the University of Kussin, told me that unless the trend is reversed the four-letter word would soon become as obsolete as the five-letter word Edsel.

"There are only two four-letter words that I am concerned with," said Prof. Langue. "While you still can't print them in your newspaper, I'm sure you know which ones I mean. In the past these words had the most powerful effect on the English language. The reason for it is that they were used sparingly and only under very great provocation.

"BUT, ALAS, IN THE *last ten years, the words are written into every stage play, and they are included in every best seller. Underground newspapers feature them in headlines, national magazines vie to print them in feature stories on Norman Mailer, and the latest place they've appeared is on the foreheads of students at the anti-war demonstrations in Chicago. There doesn't seem to be any place where one can't hear or read a four-letter word these days."*

"And this bothers you?" I said.

"Only because the words are losing their value. I have always believed that once you had proliferation in the use of these two four-letter words, they would have very little retaliatory effect. For years they have given tremendous release to people under pressure. I doubt if our GIs could have gotten through any of their wars without them. But now, through over-use, there is a great deal of apathy when you hear a four-letter word, and it has as much effect on you as the word 'rain' or 'book.'"

"But according to Mayor Daley, one of the reasons the police might have over-acted in Chicago was because of the four-letter words used against them by the mobs. They must have some emotional impact if they made the police do what they did."

"Yes, this is possibly true, but most riot training these days specifically instructs trainees to ignore obscenity from the crowds. The Chicago police broke their discipline, but we still don't know whether it was the four-letter words or what preceded or came after them that caused the police to get as rough as they did. My opinion is that the words themselves were not responsible, particularly since the police used them also. One four-letter word will always cancel out another unless it is used in a sentence."

"IF THESE TWO WORDS *go out of fashion because of over-use, what other words will replace them?"*

"They've already been replaced. You can get a much more emotional response out of someone by saying 'cops' or 'Vietnam' or 'honky' or 'nigger' than you can out of 'blank' and 'blank.'"

"People even get mad when you say 'students,'" I said.

"Right. Obscenity can no longer be counted on as a trigger word, and I think this is blanking up the whole English language."

"What can you do about it?"

"Those of us who are interested in the problem are starting a campaign to preserve our four-letter words. We think they should be declared a national heritage, and be used as a last resort only in anger, and when people can no longer reason together."

ART BUCHWALD
in the Paris HERALD TRIBUNE

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For, he is now capable of developing sophisticated nuclear weaponry, something more than just laundering and cookwork, areas where the West has traditionally rated Chinese ability highly. Secondly, in few countries of the world, are women as much the equal of men *de facto* as in China. This is remarkable transformation for a country where until recently all respectable women had their feet bound. These are the results of the Chinese Revolution. It, therefore, seems to me that any research into the psychology of modern China has to weave together three strands: Marxist ideology; the special characteristics of the Chinese Revolution before and after 1949, with emphasis on how it was different from orthodox Marxism-Leninism, in its peasant-orientation, its treatment of capitalists, especially the national capitalists, and the present Cultural Revolution; and only lastly, the mind of pre-Revolutionary China. Even intimate knowledge of just one strand is woefully inadequate, as Mr. Welch's absurd theory of the "make-believe" goes to show.

C. S. THAPA

Trinity College,
Cambridge

I SUPPOSE I could answer Mr. Thapa item by item and remind him, for example, that the elimination of foot-binding followed the Republican revolution of 1911 (not the revolution of 1949) and that the Communists have had no monopoly on the modernisation of China.

But I must say that I agree with his main point, namely that generalisation about the patterns of thought and behaviour of hundreds of millions of people, no matter how honest the intent, is a dangerous game. But it is also a game that anyone is entitled to play. Each player selects data to fit the patterns that have been revealed to him by his experience and personal impressions—and sometimes by his political commitments. Those who share his impressions and commitments applaud; those who do not, protest. Neither side can prove its case, because quantitative evidence is lacking. Mr. Thapa and I both know this. Hence we agree on the need for research in Chinese psychology. Until such research is undertaken on a massive scale, until questionnaires and projective tests can be given in a neutral setting to a representative sample of Chinese of different regions, age groups, and economic and educational levels, until the results can be compared with results of the same tests given to comparable samples in other countries—until then we shall lack the quantitative evidence needed to support generalisation about Chinese patterns of thought and behaviour. Even then there will be no license to suppose that any individual or any specific situation will conform to the patterns that research has shown to be modal, just as in physics we cannot predict the path of a single molecule of gas, although we can be quite precise about what the pressure will be at a certain temperature.

So I would say to Mr. Thapa: let us collaborate in trying to bring about conditions that will permit psychologists to go to China and conduct surveys as they have in other countries—not only in Europe, but in Japan, India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Israel, Chile, and Argentina. Then comparisons will be possible and we may be able to decide whether Chinese are more-or-less-inclined to make believe than other peoples.

Incidentally, Mr. Thapa seems to feel that the art of make-believe is discreditable. I would not agree. Chinese civilisation, which is in many respects the greatest of all world civilisations, owes a lot to it. It has provided elasticity and therefore stability, smoothed over contradictions, and enabled the Chinese to handle the complexities of life with an equally complex intellectual structure, far more sophisticated than the "yes-no" approach of Christianity and Marxism.

What saddened me in Mr. Thapa's letter was the wistful tone with which he spoke of China's accomplishments in becoming the strongest Asian nation "with sophisticated nuclear weaponry," so as to alter the foreign image of the "Chinaman" (a word that, if Mr. Thapa had had more contact with the Chinese, he would not use). I wonder; is material and military strength, in his view, the best criterion for judging a nation?

HOLMES H. WELCH

Harvard University,
Cambridge, Massachusetts

"Truth a Lie" (Chinese)

MR. Holmes Welch's observations on Chinese make-believe call to mind the only decent gag in Freud's *Jokes and Their Relations to the Unconscious:*

> Two Jews met in a railway carriage at a station in Galicia. "Where are you going?" asked one. "To Cracow," was the answer. "What a liar you are!" broke out the other. "If you say you're going to Cracow, you want me to believe you're going to Lemberg. But I know that in fact you're going to Cracow. So why are you lying to me?"

In James Strachey's translation of the book from which I quote (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), the joke is indexed under "Truth a lie (Jewish)."

CLAUDIO VITA-FINZI

London

Scotland

ALTHOUGH I HAVE very definite reservations about the practicability of much of Scottish National Party policy, I find Mr. David Marquand's remarks in your August issue ill-informed and offensive, particularly his implied parallel with the

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Patter of Tiny Footnotes

IN NOVEMBER 1884, *Nietzsche wrote his mother and sister from Mentone: "Imagine: meanwhile Herr Lanzky waited for one whole week in the Pension de Geneve (Nizza); I heard about it two days too late. Then he left for Ajaccio. A touching letter from him reached me today."*[3]

FOOTNOTE *3: "Nietzsche's sister seems to have tampered with the first part of this letter, but not with this paragraph.'*

From "Nietzsche: Four Unpublished Letters," in ENCOUNTER—*WELL! Why do you suppose Nietzsche's sister didn't tamper with that paragraph which cries out for tampering, starting with the first two words "Imagine: meanwhile . . ." which, punctuation-wise, construction-wise, sound-wise and sense-wise, leaves a lot to be desired posterity-wise? Believe me, Nietzsche, if it had been* my *sister, that paragraph would have been well tampered with, in fact, suppressed altogether and not left around to clutter up collections of published correspondence years later.*

Little by little every last letter written in the nineteenth century is finding its way into print. ENCOUNTER *is rushing contemporary correspondence into print almost before the ink is dry, and if the British post gets any slower with the two-tiered system, we'll be able to read a man's mail in* ENCOUNTER *before the fellow gets the letter in his own home.*

Does anyone ever throw a letter away in the British Isles? What a foolish question! Just a month or so ago, ENCOUNTER *printed an interminable correspondence between Randolph Churchill and Evelyn Waugh which contained these two epistolary jewels—(From Randolph to Evelyn): "I should like to see you sometime and have a talk. What are your plans?" and (from Evelyn to Randolph): "I should like to accept your kind invitation to stay at your house the night of the 23rd.' ENCOUNTER snatched these two sentences from the jaws of oblivion in the nick of time. Poor old oblivion never gets* anything *any more, certainly no letters. A fellow has to be jolly careful about leaving his letters around or they'll be on a publisher's Spring list before he's had time to answer them.*

The fact is that we are rapidly approaching the time when the only unpublished letters in the Western world will be my own, and the popular clamour for my letters has reached such a crescendo—riots in Grosvenor Square, hunger strikes in Pinsk, massacres in Lower Slobbovia—that I can't hold out much longer. All right! All right! They're too good for you, peasants, but you shall have them as soon as my sister finishes tampering.

JOHN CROSBY *in* THE OBSERVER

National Socialist Party. His assertions appear to be based on an article by John Mackintosh, M.P., which makes me wonder if he would cite Mr. Enoch Powell on the nature of the appeal of the Labour Party. As a perhaps less biased observer, I have been very struck by the way in which the *S.N.P.* does not conform to the racially inspired stereotype sketched by Mr. Marquand, in contrast say to the *N.P.D.* which I have studied more intensively. Many *S.N.P.* candidates, for example, are English. Such studies as have been completed to date suggest that the bulk of the increase in *S.N.P.* voters since the '66 Election has come from ex-Labour Party supporters motivated by disillusionment with the failure of the Labour Government to cure Scotland's undoubted economic ills rather than by "straightforward dislike of the English." The notion of the *S.N.P.* as a Scottish equivalent to the large-scale abstentions by Labour voters in recent English by-elections is much nearer the truth than "the Tartan Tories" and "Scottish Nazis" fantasy propounded by the Labour Party leadership in Scotland. Mr. Colin Bell in a recent article (7 June) in the *New Statesman* delineates very well the Left-wing nature of much *S.N.P.* policy.

In conclusion, may I suggest that the most effective way for Mr. Marquand to help prevent the growth of the anti-English feeling which we both deplore so much is to refrain from attempting to fit developments in Scotland into neat little "extremism of the centre" stereotypes, at least until his reading on the subject extends beyond articles by Labour M.P.s desperately trying to hold on to Scottish seats.

WILLIAM E. PATERSON

Department of Politics,
King's College,
University of Aberdeen

Rosten's "Yiddish & English"

I HAVE JUST this morning, hurriedly and over breakfast, read Leo Rosten's magnificent article in ENCOUNTER for September. I am looking forward to reading it again carefully and, at a first, quick reading I felt that some of the points he makes could be debated, but my overriding impulse was to write and tell you what a delightful article it is. I shall buy a dozen copies of ENCOUNTER this very day and distribute them among friends and colleagues in several European universities. I thought you might like to know.

NICHOLAS BAUM

The Principal,
Language Studies, Ltd.,
London

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Laing and the "Death Circuit"

DAVID HOLBROOK [ENCOUNTER, August] probably spells out the fears of many who have studied and/or followed R. D. Laing's psycho-analytical and social theories over the years. However, to give a quotation from another theorist and to say that this is the way Laing *ought* to have developed seems somewhat impertinent. If Holbrook fails to grasp much of what Laing is saying in his provocative paperback *The Politics of Experience* (which purposely tries to get away from academic respectability), as is suggested by his choice of quotations, and often over-simplified and contradictory comments, that is hardly a good enough reason to condemn.

My own impression, briefly stated, having followed and participated in some of the projects with which Laing is involved, is one of intense admiration for a man very aware of the fundamental problems of human beings, and the complexities entailed in the way we humans choose not to let ourselves, and others, live. Mentioning Laing in the same breath as Leary is foolish—and suggests that Holbrook denies any possibility of linking everyday human life with the imaginative flights of outstanding artists and thinkers, past or present. Laing's "descent into the unknown" might lead to disaster; but not if his intelligence, and cautiousness, continue to function as well as they have up to now.

I wonder if Mr. Holbrook has ever had personal contact with people living in any of the communities with which Laing is associated—and over a period of time. I know of no "schizoid fraud" in these set-ups, and have often found them more honest, more relaxing, than many a private home, or even the more sophisticated hospitals in the U.S.A., which I had reason to visit on frequent occasions, where the pronouncement "You are sick" ensures that the experiences (though they may be caricatures of truth) of the patients be invalidated from the start.

RONALD WEITZMAN

London

I STARTED TO READ David Holbrook's article "R. D. Laing and the Death Circuit" out of a combined interest in Laing's writings and literature. Halfway through the article I found myself concerned not with schizophrenia but with what A. Myrdal and V. Klein have called "contemporary feminine dilemmas." I readily admit that my acquaintance with psychology is limited and non-professional; I can only hope that I have misinterpreted some of the points made by Mr. Holbrook in his references to writings by D. W. Winnicott.

Holbrook writes: "The mother's capacity to go over in an intuitive way into the state of extension of personality which Winnicott calls Primary Maternal Preoccupation. By being able to 'be' for her child, she alone can give him a sense of being integrated, being a person. . . ." It seems to me that here he is reflecting a view of femininity presented by many men: *e.g.*, by Oswald Schwarz in *The Psychology of Sex* (1949), who states categorically that woman "is immediately, intimately, essentially 'one' with everything existing. . . . This oneness, this being 'in' and not 'with' things, enables women to 'know' things, understand things, inanimate and living, by what one usually calls intuition, certainly not by reason of intellect, but by partaking in their existence."

I say that I hope I am mistaken in seeing a parallel, because I had considered the latter statement to be thoroughly discredited; a masculine attempt to support by reference to psychology what Simone de Beauvoir (in *The Nature of the Second Sex*) calls one of the myths about women: created by "paternalism that claims woman for hearth and home and defines her as sentiment, inwardness, immanence."

In agreeing with de Beauvoir when she writes that "every existent is at once immanence and transcendence; when one offers the existent no aim, or prevents him from attaining any, or robs him of his victory, then his transcendence falls vainly into the past—that is to say, falls back into immanence"; in believing that all individuals include within them the capacities both to "be" and to "do," which vary in dominance *not* according to sex, but according to personality (and the way that this has been developed); in refusing to accept the concept that woman should only "be"—it seems that I have run the risk of making my three young children into potential schizophrenics!

I would very much appreciate an assurance from someone better qualified than myself that I am completely wrong in my interpretation of Mr. Holbrook's exposition. Women today are only beginning to come to terms with the true meaning of "Emancipation." Are we now in danger of being thrown back into the maelstrom from which we are still struggling to escape?

PAULINE WILLIAMS

Old Basford,
Nottingham

Mea-Culpism?

THEO SOMMER, "The Easter Riot," [ENCOUNTER, June,] leaves us guessing about "the wrong turn" national life has taken in Germany, about what the "examination of the German conscience" would bring to light, what was "at stake," what the "burning problem" is, what "share of blame" Germany has for its alienated youth, what "the impulse to progress" should lead to, what "permanent reforms" have to be considered, what the "justified demands" of German students are, what "steady renewal" appears to be necessary.

So far as Germany goes, Theo Sommer does not appear to be in agreement with Gus Tyler, who wrote in a recent *New Leader*: "Reason does not demand that we indulge in a national carnival of *mea-culpism* that grants licence and logic to the unprogrammed angry-ones who would tear down social institutions slowly built up over generations."

But then, why not be specific?

CHRISTIAN F. DE VOS

Glenview, Ill.

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AUTHORS

Ignazio Silone was recently awarded the Campiello prize in Italy for his latest book, *The Adventure of a Poor Christian*, which is a dramatic dialogue based on the life of Celestin V who came (like Silone himself) from the Abruzzi, and whose "great denial" in exchanging the Papacy for the life of a hermit was criticised by Dante. The Campiello prize is awarded by an unusual jury of three hundred readers, selected from all walks of life; it happened to include, in addition to a cross-section of writers and literary journalists, several outstanding Italian actors and actresses as well as the President of the Italian football league. Silone's most recent contribution to ENCOUNTER was his two-part essay on "Re-Thinking Progress" (April and May 1968). . . .

Arthur Koestler's book *The Ghost in the Machine* (Hutchinson) together with *The Sleepwalkers* (1959) and *The Act of Creation* (1964) completes his trilogy on science and civilisation. A new collection of his essays has recently been published under the title *Drinkers of Infinity*. His most recent contribution to ENCOUNTER was "Evolution and Revolution in the History of Science" in the December 1965 issue. . . .

Christopher Sykes is the author of *Four Studies in Loyalty* (1946) *Orde Wingate* (1959) and *Cross Roads to Israel* (1965). His biography of Adam von Trott zu Solz, *Troubled Loyalty*, will shortly be published by Collins at 45s. . . .

Sir Herbert Marchant is at present Associate Director of the Institute of Race Relations in London. He was for three years the British Ambassador to Cuba. Che Guevara was killed in action in Bolivia a year ago in October 1967. His *Collected Writings* (*Venceremos!*, edited by John Gerassi), has recently been published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson; and many English-language publishers have, almost simultaneously, brought out his last diary notes, over which the Cuban and Bolivian Governments recently had something of a copyright quarrel. The *Bolivian Diary* has just been published by Jonathan Cape/Lorimer at 25s. Allen & Unwin has published *The Complete Bolivian Diaries* in the Daniel Jones edition. (We hear that there is yet another translation being sold on the London streets by *The Black Dwarf*.) There are also editions of Guevara's manual of *Guerrilla Warfare* published by Monthly Review Press and by Cassell. . . .

A FIRST PART of *Moravagine* was published in the November ENCOUNTER. The translation is by Alan Brown, and the long-awaited English edition of this masterly work by **Blaise Cendrars** (1887–1961) will shortly be published in London by Peter Owen. . . .

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